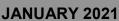
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of BELLA VISTA

The Good News





Glimpses of Grace

Rev. Jeanne Williams, Senior Pastor

"Hindsight is 20/20," so the saying goes. This is an allusion to perfect vision being 20-20. As we look back at the last year, 2020 was not perfect. Not by a long shot. But as the pandemic put a screeching halt to our lives for a few months and then greatly altered the rest of the year, perhaps there are some lessons to be learned, and some "glasses" that

need to be refined. One of our leaders often reminds me that life is what you make of it and how you approach it.

I had big dreams for 2020. It took me a while to realize I didn't have to let go of those dreams, but they might need to be adjusted a bit. The absolute highlight of my year was the adoption being finalized of our two boys. There again, that was to have taken place in March and month after month it was delayed until August. That journey reminded me that the dream wasn't over, it was just altered. And that I needed reminding of that old saying about "patience being a virtue!"

The United Methodist Church was set for a banner year as well. We were planning to gather as a worldwide community in Minneapolis in May where we were going to debate theological differences and agree to some resolution. The pandemic shifted this as well and instead reminded us as a connectional church that we care deeply about our brothers and sisters around the world as we all fight a pandemic. The UMC in Africa continues to be a place of hope and love as they care for sick people locally, and provide connection to healthcare resources from around the world. All thanks to our global connection! The General Conference is rescheduled for August of 2021, by the way.

Our own church had big dreams for 2020 and certainly some of these have been delayed or altered. In the rest of the newsletter, you will find pictures and stories from all corners of our church family and its ministries that highlight our year. As we reflect on 2020 and look towards 2021, I encourage you to see the Light of Christ as He leads us into a new year and perhaps new lenses with which to serve the world.

In closing, I invite you to reflect on these verses from the Apostle Paul to the Romans (8:38-39): ^{"38} I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers ³⁹ or height or depth, or any other thing that is created."

May God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord envelope you as we begin this year full of promises!

New Year **Blessings**!

Rev. Jeanne



 $\mathcal{M}y$ Blessings In 2020

THE GOOD NEWS

January 2021



JOINING in the JOURNEY TOGETHER Rev. Brenda Wideman, Associate Pastor

Seeing More Clearly

When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good. We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love. 1 Corinthians 13:11-13 MSG

I remember back at the beginning of 2020 joking with someone that in the year 2020, we would see more clearly. (20/20 is optimally clear eyesight.) ⁽²⁾ In fact, checking back, I even wrote my January 2020 newsletter article about this. Now, I wasn't referring to getting eye surgery, which some of us did this past year; but I was referring to seeing and understanding our God and the Holy Spirit's insight into what life should be all about.

I had <u>no idea</u>, what was ahead for us in the coming year. Oh, my, it has been quite the year!!! Sometimes it takes difficulties in life to cause us to spend time in reflection, to cause us to see more clearly the hand of God all around us, the hand of God that brings new life and new understanding. We have surely had our fair share of difficulties this past year; illness, death, divisiveness, economic trauma, staying in isolation to be safe, ..., and the list goes on. So in those difficulties, have we taken the time to reflect? I think many of us have done this. And in the reflection, many of us have realized, just as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13, that the greatest of these is the connection we have through Love! The greatest of these is Love of our God, and Love of our Neighbor.

And here we are at the beginning of 2021. We have been given a brand new year, a new beginning, a fresh start, another chance for new life, another chance to live life in the way our Lord and Savior intended; to live it abundantly, to live it with Love.

For many of us, this 2020 year has brought profound grief. Maybe that grief was caused by the loss of a loved one, the loss of health, the loss of a job, the loss of companionship. Whatever the cause, you may be suffering from a crisis of the heart. If this is you, I invite you to join us as we journey together in search of a new beginning in life, a fresh start. **"When Mourning Dawns: Living your Way through the Seasons of Your Grief"** will begin on Thursday, January 21st. Each Thursday evening, from 5:30-7:00pm, for 9 weeks, we will gather to learn about and walk through our grief together. This is not a 'spill your guts' kind of gathering. Instead we learn what grief does to us, share experiences in ways that are healing, watch videos that offer suggestions of how to heal, and lift our burdens through the Love and Care of each other. Until we can safely gather in the same room, this will be an on-line gathering, and so will require registration to receive the on-line Zoom link that will bring us virtually together.

I pray for all of us that 2021 will be the year that we will understand more clearly the Love which comes from our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. In this year, may we journey together to find and know a greater Love of our God, Love of our neighbor, and Love of ourselves. May our Love be Extravagant in the New Year!

Blessings, Pastor Brenda



MEDIA MUSINGS

Kacy Spears, Director of Communications

Okay, This Is the Last One...

Friends, a few months ago, I wrote a newsletter article on Ephesians 6 and God's timing. In that article, I prefaced with "no, I'm not leaving!" I feel like I cannot preface that anymore.

God's timing truly is divine. I've known it was part of my plan to go to graduate school since my first year of undergrad. God knew that desire of my heart. In 2015, I applied for a graduate program in Communications, excited to continue my learning and jump right in! When I got my acceptance letter. my heart sank. I was accepted, but I got a very clear "nope" from God. I waited. I prayed. I sat on my hands. I watched my friends following their academic dreams, and I felt so left out. In 2018, I applied for a graduate program in Higher Education, thinking this was my path because of how passionate I am about students having access to higher education. Again, I got the acceptance letter, and my heart sank. I revoked my application and continued to wait. Along comes 2020...and with it a pandemic and time in solitude to listen to God, to pray, to ask "What's next?!"

As you now know, I started a Library Science program in August, and I've been loving it! God knew I had to wait and experience more life before I found His path.

Church, I'm pursuing library science as a career, and that means I can no longer serve you full-time. I've sat down a couple of times to write this, and it's not gotten easier. My last full-time day as your Communications Director will be January 13, 2020. I'll be around part-time to train my replacement. I hope to fit a few Zoom (or maybe in-person) studies into my schedule to see you and learn with you!

I love you, and I'll miss seeing you regularly – hearing your stories in the doorway of my office, waving as you exit the sanctuary, and hugging you.

If you ever need to contact me, my personal email address is kacy.espears@gmail.com.

Kacy



Thank you to everyone who contributed to our community wide, free, delicious Thanksgiving meal. Whether it was by your monetary donations or your time, we appreciate you. The pastors said many

prayers with people as they picked up their meals and we have received a lot of positive feedback. It seemed to fill a void that we didn't even know to the extent that it existed in this unusual year of 2020. We are the church!



OUR FAMILY

Each month this space is used to tell about the people who are part of our church family. If you know of a graduation, community recognition, someone moving away or moving in, whatever the rest of the church might like to know to keep up with folks, let me know so I can include the information in these pages. Send your information Brenda Wideman, Associate Pastor of to Congregational at 479-855-1158 Care or brenda@fumcbellavista.com

JOYS

Christmas Carols and Children's Play

On Sunday, December 13, we celebrated the Joy of Music and the Joy of Children, in their Christmas Play. This service is still online. Go to our website or Facebook page to celebrate with joyous song!









Drive-Thru Nativity

Our Children and Youth, along with their adult leaders, joined together to create a Drive-Thru Nativity, complete with familiar scenes and music. We hope this will be able to become an annual Christmas tradition in the community, joining with the Concordia Light display!



Love Your Neighbor

In this time of divisiveness, we know we are a church family who spreads Christ's love as He has called us to do. Purchase a sign in the office for \$10 and display it in your yard, and encourage your neighborhood to love each other.



<u>New Baby Coming</u> - - Rick and Hannah Mercereau, grandson and grand-daughter-in-law of Dick and Karen Bacon, are expecting a new baby girl in June. Such exciting news is welcome music to our ears! Rick is a member of the military. Rick is currently stationed in Hawaii and has been on our prayer list for years.

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OUR FAMILY

IN MEMORIUM

Anna Katherine Watts – peacefully passed away on Thursday, November 19, at Jamestown Health and Rehab in Rogers, AR, after testing positive for COVID. Anna and her husband Kenneth joined our church in 1993. Kenneth passed away, also at Jamestown, in April of 2013. Anna will be laid to rest next to Kenneth in Greenburg, Kansas. Please be in prayer for the friends and caregivers of Anna, especially Brenda Austin, a special caregiver, as well as the good people of Jamestown, who were Anna's family for many years.

<u>Charles Hill</u> – passed away on Friday, December 11th, peacefully at home with family by his side. Charley and Florence have been active members with us for 25 years, helping with acolyte ministry and ushering and spreading a joyful spirit in many other ways. They had been married for 66 years as of this past



July. There was a service for Charley at the Bella Vista Funeral Home at 1:00pm on Wednesday, December 16. Rev Jeanne and Pastor Brenda officiated. Please keep Florence and her family in your prayers as they mourn the loss of Charley.



<u>Connie Danielson</u> – passed away here in Bella Vista on Saturday, December 5. Connie was a member of Naomi Circle, She had been unable to worship with us for quite a few years as she fought a constant battle with leukemia. Connie and

her late husband Charles had been members with us since July of 1995. Charles passed away this past June. There is no memorial service for Connie planned at this time. Please keep her family and friends in your prayers as they grieve her passing. <u>Karen Young</u> – sister of Ken Swanson, passed away on Wednesday, December 2, in Iowa. Karen had been diagnosed recently with heart and kidney failure. Ken was able to talk to her on Monday, November 30, her birthday, just before she passed on Wednesday. Please keep Ken and his family in your prayers as they mourn the loss of Karen.

Zach Wisely – brother-in-law of Gretchen Magee, passed away suddenly. Gretchen's sister, Caitlin, and Gretchen's children need our prayers, as they grieve the loss of a devoted husband and favorite uncle. Please keep this family in your prayers.

Judy Neece – 102 year-old mother of Marion Korns' son-in-law, recently passed away peacefully in Rocky, Oklahoma. She was the mother of 9 children and a COVID survivor. Please keep this family in prayers as they mourn the passing of this inspiring and strong woman.

Lou Larson – a friend of Lora Burch and longtime resident of Concordia Independent Living, passed away Tuesday morning, December 15, after having been transferred to Circle of Life Hospice recently. Please keep Lou's daughter Sue Kenny and his family in prayers as they travel to be together at this time.



The Care and Share trailer will be in our upper parking lot on **Monday**, **January 18th** from 7:00am 'til about 5:00pm. What is sold in the Care and Share Thrift Store and Food Pantry in Gravette is all donated items, and the profits go to support those in need in western Benton County. They take donations of all kinds. Please help!



LAY LEADER'S MESSAGE Dave Broers, Lay Leader

Hello 2021!!!! I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year. I pray everyone was able to see some family in one form or fashion. I

do not know how many times during this last year I quoted Dr. Robert Schuller "Tough times never last but tough people do!" We are in tough times but we will endure through this as well. However, we will not get through unscathed for I've lost some friends. As we start into the new year with winter, we need to work diligently on taking care of our family, friends, church and community. Make that phone call, send that card or letter, or take your neighbors some cookies. Let's keep the Christmas cheer and goodwill all through 2021! I look forward to seeing everyone sometime in the coming year.

Peace and blessings,

Dave

Stewardship Corner

In recent years scientific research has validated the ancient wisdom of the Bible: "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever." Psalm 36:1.

Gratitude or being thankful is an attitude of appreciation for something good and beneficial that a person has received or will receive from another person or from God.

First United Methodist Church is grateful for your support during the challenging year of 2020. We need your continuing support in 2021, which will be a more challenging year financially than in 2020. We thank God for the many blessings He has given our church in 2020, and we thank you, the congregation, for your gifts.

Ken Swanson, Finance Chair



Artie Lawless,

UMM President



Friends. **Continue to Check on Friends** Hello, Methodist Men.

I picked out the message above because I feel we are soooo ready for 2021. I think we can all agree this past year took at least 20 years to get thru and we're all saying, "Bring on the New Year"! Can I get an Amen!

I'm calling 2021 the Year of Jesus. Why? Because just like it was a couple of thousand years ago, everyone was waiting for a miracle, a savior, a bright and loving light to fend off a terrible darkness. They prayed, they hoped. God heard that, God saw that. And God delivered!!

2020 will always be remembered as the year of the Covid virus and all the darkness it brought upon us. The sickness, the suffering, the loss. Still, we stayed in faith, we prayed with hope, we cared for each other with love. God heard that! God saw that! And God "delivered us from evil" as he has promised. Can I get a BIG Amen!

Yes, things changed for God's people after the birth of Jesus and things will change for us as we start to heal from the ravages of the pandemic. We need to thank God for caring for us, for loving us, for keeping his promise.

We will never be able to express enough gratitude to all the medical and scientific souls for their dedication and caring for the many millions of us affected by this virus. In some way it touched everyone on the planet. God bless you all.

May 2021 be a year of health for everyone, a year of hope for everyone and a year of love for evervone.

Never forget we are the children of the most high God and he will never stop loving us.

Happy New Year First United...

Many Blessings,

Artie

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January 2021 Newsletter ~ November 2020 Financial Data										
		2020 Actual		020 Budget						
Month of November *Inco	ome \$	37,808.32	\$	36,709.84						
Month of November Exper	nses \$	43,169.96	\$	47,114.17						
Differe	nce \$	(5 <i>,</i> 361.64)	\$	(10,404.33)						
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Year to Date (as of 11/30/20) Exper	nses \$	467,123.00	\$	518,339.17						
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Year to Date Income including PPP lo	an \$	502,343.98								
Year to Date Expens	ses \$	467,123.00								
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* Income does not include Missions or Endowment Intere	st or PPP L	oan								

* Income does not include Missions or Endowment Interest or PPP Loan **Amy Gilmore**, Church Administrator





Angel Tree Once again YOU stepped up and helped us provide Christmas gifts to 45 children this vear. With all the uncertainty, with the church being closed. with the short turn around time, we did it! When Rev. Jeanne sent out a plea for

shopping dollars, YOU came through with abundance. We had a little bit extra, so we were able to send a check directly to Sharing & Caring which they used to finish up some shopping. Thank you to Michelle Forst and her crew of kids for preparing the bags and to Kacy for helping us shop till we dropped! We are the church!

The Annual Christmas Card Delivery to homebound members and friends was completed by members of the Wesley Shepherd Group early in December. The 44 festive sacks were filled with an ornament and signed Christmas cards from FUMC members. The



Wesley group thanks all those who participated for taking time to make this ministry a success.

Cynthia Augspurger

Co-chair of Wesley Shepherd Group



Thank you for contributing to Methodist Family Health during the month of December! With your contributions, MFH can continue to provide mental health services to families across Arkansas.



The Shoe Box Ministry has been continuing to carry along each month. We had 200 Christmas

Boxes to go out to Salvation Army & 7 Hills. We thank the Catholic Church for their dedication to this ministry, along with the Presbyterian and Lutheran Churches. Cheryl has been doing some shopping for other agencies that we care for, bulk items, that they are most appreciative to receive. Every month the Martha Circle has packed Sunshine Sacks with hygiene items for Cooper School and we thank them for their dedication. We want to say a big Thank You for those items we receive throughout the year, just got in December lots of new socks, which the Shelters really need, We are in need of small and Shampoo etc. travel-size Shampoo. We have never had to buy much of this as when people traveled we always had plenty to go around, but now since Covid, people are not traveling as much, so our supply has rapidly dwindled. Also Readers Digest or small magazines are welcome. We Pray that you all had a joyous Christmas and are well. Karen Roenfeld, Cheryl Campbell and Maryann Johnson. Your Shoebox Team



The Staff/Parish Committee wants to take this opportunity to thank everybody who sent a love offering for

our staff. They have had a difficult year but have still been working hard to come up with meaningful ways to connect with all of us. They need to be loved on in any way we can, not only at Christmas but all year long. Lynn Prueitt, Chairman, SPRC Committee

Do you feel called to organize missions? Your church is in need of a Missions Coordinator! Contact Rev. Jeanne at jeanne@fumcbellavista.com or 479-855-1158.

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January 2021



When Mourning Dawns – Living your Way through the Seasons of Your Grief

Thursdays, beginning January 21st, 5:30-7:00pm ~ 9 weeks Gathering by Zoom ~ Registration Required Register by calling the church office or online at www.fumcbellavista.com/grief



Welcome Renee Van Dyke! Renee is our new NextGen Director.

Renee moved to Bella Vista in Sept. 2018 from the Iron Range of North eastern Minnesota to avoid the poten-

tial of getting lost in a blizzard and freezing.

She comes to us with a 17 year career in all aspects of medical imaging. At that time in life she decided to become a stay-at-home mom to her two daughters. Her oldest, Neva, is now a brilliant property law attorney in Chicago. Her younger, Siri, is an amazing 1st grade teacher in Mexico, MO. Renee and her family were recognized as the 2003 Minnesota Women of Today Family of the Year for service to their church and community.

When she re-entered the work force, Renee served as parish associate at First Presbyterian Church in Hibbing, MN for 8 years. During this time her focus was elderly, homebound and end-of-life ministry. She also was a hospice chaplain for two years and a volunteer hospital chaplain for two years. Her assigned units were Intensive Care and OB/Gyn. She graduated from the Presbytery of



From the Organ Console Broc Hite, Organist/Pianist

We continue our journey into the unknown, as we turn the page into a new year. Yes, lots of those unknowns are out of our control, including the continuing impact of Covid-19 or new leadership as the result of federal, state and local elections. Here at the church, we have new leadership in Contemporary Worship and for our Youth and Children. We must embrace change, because like it or not, it's happening!

Some of these changes will affect me directly. Already, I've seen a difference in style with our new Contemporary Worship director. I'm getting ready to learn lots of new Spanish piano music for my piano postludes. I'm going to continue to seek out new opportunities with soloists and small ensembles to offer special music in the absence of vocal and bell choirs.

You may have noticed a new focus in my Music Monday feature on Facebook. Already, many of you have expressed appreciation for the guests we've featured there. I'm looking to become a better liturgical improviser on organ. It's exciting to consider a 50th anniversary organ recital to celebrate the birth of our Casavant in Kansas City, Kansas, in 1971.

I hope that our continued attempt to bring quality music to you, both during worship and via Music Monday, is bridging the gap that the pandemic has caused. Let us know how we're doing!

Broc

Please join me online! On the Web: <u>https://brochite.com</u> On Facebook and Instagram: @BrocKeysPedals

Northern Waters lay pastor program in 2011 and received her call to serve in the pulpit of Congregation of the Good Shepherd, a federated PC(USA) and ELCA congregation.

Throughout the years, Renee has taught Sunday School from Kindergarten through college level. She coordinated VBS and holiday programs. At CGS she preached and taught, changed light bulbs and cooked the lutefisk.

Shortly after relocating to Bella Vista, Renee's husband, Roger, passed away from brain cancer. She can be selectively available to rich, handsome men for dinner or even a trip to Europe if he's paying (joking, joking). Send Renee a warm welcome at renee@fumcbellavista.com!

January 2021



Welcome David Williams! David is our new Contemporary Worship Director!

David Williams was born and raised in Fayetteville, AR and if a in the Methodist Church Af

has spent his entire life in the Methodist Church. After years of serving in contemporary worship throughout high school and college, he began fulltime ministry in 2015.

Outside of leading worship at the contemporary service, David can be found supporting all things Razorbacks and wearing flannel shirts year-round. He and his wife of 5 years, Kristen, live in Fayetteville with their wonderful dog, George Bailey. He enjoys anything-with-meat pizza, golfing, and basketball.

Catch David leading Wednesday Night Worship or in the church office! Send him a warm welcome at david@fumcbellavista.com!



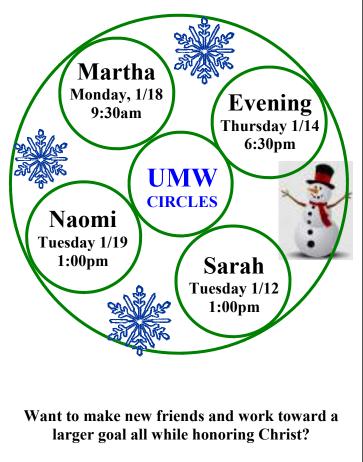
UMW will have a board meeting on Wednesday, January 6th at 9:30 AM via Zoom.

Martha Circle has been able to meet either outside the church, in the church or at homes. We will see what happens in January as to how we will be able to get together. We were all able to achieve our goals and give supplies to the UMW as they requested. Since we cannot be in the church as usual we have been getting 2 members of our Circle, the last several months, to go to Shoe Box Room and do the packs for Cooper School. Thank much for your help vou so in this difficult time of trying to be together. Pray that you all had a wonderful Christmas and that the New Year will bring much happiness and we can be together in our lovely Church once more. Karen R.

Thanks for all of your donations to Returning Home NWA. You donated 105 rolls of TP, 45 toothbrushes, 31 tubes of toothpaste, 10 bottles of dish detergent, 4 bottles of body



wash, 1 bottle of conditioner, 1 tube body lotion, 1 net scrubbie, 1 brush, 6 disposable razors, 6 bars of soap, 1 package of cleaning cloths, 3 pair men's briefs, and 12 pair of socks. We also had a total of \$225 cash donations. Thank you for your generosity. I delivered these items and they were gratefully accepted. **Judy Bilyeu**



Join a United Methodist Women's Circle! Call the church office for more details on where the Circles have their monthly meetings.

Dear Church Family,

Dorothy and I wish to thank everyone for your thoughts, prayers, cards, calls and visits. We are both progressing well, but still have a way to go. Please keep us in your prayers. Dorothy is in love with the prayer shawl Pastor Brenda brought by, and uses it every day (Thank You, ladies for all your work). We hope to be able to greet everyone again in church in the new year.

Thank You and God Bless,

Carmen & Dorothy Phillips

I just finished eating a delicious Thanksgiving dinner provided by church members who unselfishly spent a lot of their time this week preparing, packaging, and giving out complete turkey dinners so that members, like me, could enjoy a traditional part of the Thanksgiving celebration. I do hope that although they did it out of love, that they can be recognized and thanked in some way for their efforts and they know how much "we" as recipients appreciated the delicious meal that we otherwise would not have been able to enjoy. They truly helped to make it a Happy Thanksgiving.

-0.9-

Dawn Thompson



Thank You to everyone in the church for your signed Christmas Cards for our homebound members You were a blessing to each one of them! Wesley Shepherd Group

If you have not returned your "**Estimate of Giving**" card in the postage pre-paid envelope that was sent with it, we would appreciate having those as soon as possible. It is hard to plan a budget for THIS year if we do not have a ball-park figure of income. Your generosity in these difficult times has been greatly appreciated. We hope to continue with, and build upon, the many different programs, classes, and services we have been able to offer and deliver here at FUMCBV. "Thank You" to Cub Scout Pack 3410 for the joyful Caroling and wonderful Christmas gift basket they delivered to me at home. Merry Christmas to All and may you be Blessed with Love, Joy and Peace!

Shirley Hofmann



Thanks to our church family for the calls, cards, and visits after our son's passing. A special thanks to the staff that handled the service. It was great and made us feel much better.

Wayne & Joanne Hubbert

Dawn Thompson retires after almost 20 years of service.

Dawn has led our Handbell Choir from an humble beginning place to being one of the most superb choirs in the area. Dawn decided that it is time to "pass on the baton" to the next director. We are sad to see Dawn passing on the baton, but know that she will still be an active member of our church and music team. In fact, she will be in worship in February doing a duet!

We will hold a reception for Dawn once we are able to gather safely. In the meantime, Dawn, thank you for your dedication, service, and gifts to our church family through your music!





First United Methodist Church 20 Boyce Drive, Bella Vista, AR 72715

We're Here to Serve You

Senior Pastor - Rev. Jeanne Williams Associate Pastor - Rev. Brenda Wideman Church Administrator - Amy Gilmore Church Secretary - Janet Walton Communications Director - Kacy Spears NextGen Director - Renee Williams NextGen Children's Staff - Anne Miner Music Ministries Director - Dr. Lawrence Zehring Handbell Director - Dawn Thompson Organist/Pianist - Broc Hite Contemporary Worship Leader - David Williams

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Newsletter Deadline: 20th of the month

Return Service requested

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