

Highland United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 34
Callaway, VA 24067



THE HIGHLANDER

December 2018

What Really Matters?

Have you received a gift that is exactly what you needed? Has someone helped you at just the right time and in a way that you needed most? Have you ever met someone and shared a common bond—suddenly realized you were heard and understood?

I felt this way when I first learned about the Church Year. Did you know that the Church—around the world—has seasons and special days of its own? It can't be found in the Bible. Pastors about a hundred years after Jesus died and rose for us created this Church Year. They saw how followers of Jesus were acting just like the people the world. You couldn't tell them apart. So, they came up with a year where we live the life of Jesus—year by year—living in Jesus' life could shape us as his followers. The year has seasons of celebration (Christmas and Easter) and sober reflection (Advent and Lent). We start the year with Advent, which means "coming," or "arriving" of Jesus. We start expecting and waiting for Jesus. Then, Jesus is born with Christmas. We move through the year with Jesus to the cross and empty grave—Lent and Easter. I love Advent and as my hair turns grayer, I love it even more. Because I can honestly say, I hate the world's Christmas. The world pushes people to spend more money than they have—growing in the bondage of debt. The world forgets people hurt and struggle, miss loved ones, and are lonely.

Now, don't get me wrong—I am not a Grinch or Scrooge. I love driving on Christmas night, looking at Christmas lights. You may find me misty eyed looking at them, but they are beautiful and the people who put up decorations do them to help others find joy—these are Jesus' special friends. And I love a good Santa Clause toy that shakes and dances. And my favorite Christmas memories are watching the movie, "It's a Wonderful Life" at a \$2 movie theater in Richmond where right before we sang carols to an organ and felt joy as fake snow was thrown from the balcony.

It's the world I take issue with—the people who say they are celebrating Christmas but make people frantic and frazzled forgetting what is important and matters in life. Jesus' Christmas is all about what matters in life. This is why the church is to be found in the weeks before Christmas pondering and praying how we wait for Jesus' return. Are we ready? Are we found doing what matters? Is our life too cluttered to welcome Jesus? Have we put off what we think we will have time to do tomorrow? Have our lives become a constant chasing after happiness and peace that can only be found in Jesus? For four weeks—Advent—we hear words from the Bible about people who waited when he first came and how people got ready for Jesus' return.

The church Advent offers what we hunger and need most—to take time to realize what really matters. This has been a tough year for our community and congregations. Dear people are celebrating their first heavenly Christmas with Mary, Joe, Jesus, wise folk... Our lives changed by illness and death, we need Advent even more. Advent helps us reject the world's ways of coping with our morality and hurt—by sobering up and realizing what and who matters. Who would you love to spend time with? It's okay if its shopping—but spend time with others—the gift is in being together. Who do you need to give a hug and say, "I love you?" How is Jesus part of your life? How do you want to grow in your life? What have you been putting off? What matters? What really matters? I look forward to worshiping with you this Advent, so our arms and hearts will be wide open to receive Jesus born to us anew.

Blessings, Amy

Schedules

Greeter for December

Mitch Webb

UMW

The UMW will meet on Monday, December 17, 2018 at 6:30 p. m. Please bring finger foods and a \$10.00 gift. Vicki will furnish the punch. The UMW is always open for any lady in and outside our congregation to join us. Also, **no meeting in January or February.**

OTHER NEWS AND NOTES

Advent Wreath Readings

The four weeks before Christmas is a special season in the church called “Advent.” The word Advent in Latin means “Coming” or “Arrival.” In Advent we remember that Jesus has promised to return. Are we ready for his coming again? We look to all those who waited and prepared for his coming the first time around. We hear from the Bible where people encouraged us to be ready and how to wait. They remind us what is really important. The first Sunday of Advent is December 2.

One of the special ways we celebrate Advent is to light a candle each Sunday. The candles are in a circle—reminding us of God’s unending love. A special reading is read while we light the candle. If you would like to help one Sunday—see Pastor Amy or the sign-up sheet on the Pastor’s Office Door. A copy of the readings can be found there and there will be copies that Sunday available. (In case you forget). Thank you very much!

Advent Devotions

Free on the table (by the entrance of the sanctuary) devotionals for Advent. Thank you to Vicki Hodges for ordering them.

Highland’s Christmas Program—December 9 (10 am)

Sunday morning (10 am) December 9, Highland will offer their Christmas performance. This will include children's nativity. Please let Jennifer know if you would like to participate. Santa will be visiting the manger, then he will go upstairs to welcome children to sit on his lap and talk with him. A potluck lunch will follow his visit. We welcome anyone and everyone to participate. If you have any questions, see Jennifer. She can be reached at 483-5579 or jennifer.brubaker@frco.k12.va.us

Blue Christmas Worship Service

Come just as you are for this special worship service at Bethany Church of the Brethren on December 9, Sunday, at 3:30 p. m. In the midst of darkness Jesus’ light shines. Rev. Jessica Slusher and Rev. Amy Pannell pray you will leave with a glimmer of hope. There is no shame in feeling sad or lonely when the world is pushing happiness. The holidays can be very difficult. This worship service is for you—no need to dress up—whatever you have been through, come for light and hope. Bring your heart and what bothers you. It is a quiet time with music, meditations, prayer to leave renewed in the hustle and bustle.

Christmas Angel Tree Sunday, December 16

One of the special ways Highland remembers loved ones grieving and the promise of why our Savior came is a Christmas Memory Angle Tree. If you have a loved one who died this past year, you can place an angel on the Christmas Tree during worship, joining other angels from years’ past. A booklet is printed every year with a list of all the angels—those who have died but we remember. If you would like to have your loved one included in this special time in worship and in the booklet, please contact Tricia Custer at 483-5035 or PatriciaCuster3@gmail.com by December 9. If you are putting an angle on the tree, please bring a gold, white, or silver one. These can be found at Walmart or any craft stores. Thank you to Kelly Moran and Crystal Weaver for volunteering to help. Pam Messenger lovingly worked with Tricia for this for years.

Christmas Caroling at Rocky Mount Health and Rehabilitation (Old Trinity)
New Hope invites you to join them on December 19, Wednesday, (6 pm). Wear your most festive hat and come make a joyful noise as we sing carols and say hello to residents at Rocky Mount Health and Rehabilitation on 300 Hatcher Street. We will go to Dairy Queen after for fellowship.

Christmas Eve Opportunities

Worship on Christmas Eve, December 24, Monday, receiving the gift that Jesus is born to us and the world. Communion at **Highland**—4:00-6:00 p.m. Stop by anytime between 4 and 6 pm. The sanctuary will have the lights dimmed, soft music playing. Come in for time of personal prayer. Come up to the altar and Pastor Amy will serve you communion. You can stay for prayer and leave anytime you wish. All are welcome! It's grace and you can't mess it up.

Candle Light Christmas Eve Service at **New Hope** (3901 Old Forge Road) at 7:00 p.m. We will sing Christmas Carols, hear the story of our Savior's birth, share communion, and sing by candle light. All are welcome!

SHARE THE NEWS -- Do you have something exciting God is doing that you want to invite others to join in? Send bulletin announcements to Pastor Amy by Wednesdays at amypannell@vaumc.org or call 483-1053. Send your shout out to Katherine McPherson for the Facebook Page: katmac@centurylink.net

Gogginsville UMC invites you to their Drive Through Nativity on Saturday, **December 8** from 6:00 p. m. to 9:00 p. m. This event is free. Bring the whole family and come witness the life of Jesus Christ in live scenes. Weather date is Sunday, December 9.

Thank you to everyone who contributed with your prayers, presence and gifts for blessing others at Thanksgiving through the Pack A Sack program and the Thanksgiving baskets.

Thank you to everyone who helped, supported and rallied the Relay for Life event at Henry. What a sweet, sweet spirit filled the place.

Council Meeting will be held **January 13, 2019** after morning worship service.

Congratulations to Brian and Hannah Weaver on the birth of their daughter, Elizabeth Sarah. Born October 24 weighing nine pounds fifteen ounces.

Congratulations to Rob and Robin Morris on the birth of their daughter, Melody Jane. Born November 11 weighing in 7 pounds.

Kelly Moran invites people who will be placing an angel on the Christmas Tree to contact her by **December 12**. She is working on the Angel Booklet. Her contact information is kellymoran@frco.k12.va.us or 540-352-2020.

We will be adopting a family at Christmas. If you are interested in helping with donations or shopping, please let Jennifer know. Jennifer's contact information is jenniferbrubaker@frco.k12.us.va or 540-483-5579.

If you have a child\grandchild who would like to be in the nativity on **December 9**, please let Jennifer know this week.

NO NEWSLETTER FOR JANUARY!!

Prayer List

Carrie Fisher
Loleine Fisher
H. L. Nolan
Barbara Guilliams
Wayne Stanley
Jimmy and Mary Mills
Family of Rebecca McCall
Patty Jamison Sigmon
Jeffrey Gaubatz
Jeffrey Brubaker
Cheryl Powell
Family of Dave Kriner
Family of Pam Messenger
Family of Tammy Keith
Dean Blankenship
Andrew Snead
Mr. Kelley
Mary Amos
Family of Tom Hatcher

Birthdays and Anniversaries

December 2	B – Becky McPherson B – Billy Moran A – Keith and Jennifer Brubaker
December 12	B – Kenny Bernard
December 15	B – Betsy Stanley
December 20	B – Bobby Sloan
December 22	A – Jimmy and Betty Guilliams B – Travis McPherson B – Logan Krauss
December 25	B – Joyce Johnson
December 26	B – Betty Guilliams
December 27	B – Chris Hall
December 28	A – Timmy and Michelle Dudley
December 30	B – Sue Bernard
January 1	B – Wileina Furrow
January 3	B – Tricia Custer
January 6	A – Coy and Caroline Guilliams
January 10	B – Newton Guilliams
January 12	A – Earl and Helen Akers
January 14	B – Cindy Jamison
January 15	B – Eric Krauss
January 16	B – Paula Furrow
January 17	B – Jordan Dudley
January 18	B – Jonathan Custer
January 20	B – Emily Bayly
January 21	B – Jennifer Brubaker
January 24	A – Jonathan and Amanda Custer
January 27	B – Logan Custer
January 28	B – Jimmy Guilliams
January 31	B – Benny Fisher

God's Miracle

Mary was young and betrothed to wed Joseph of David's line.

She was shocked to hear what the angel said in that special chosen time.

She couldn't understand how it could be when the angel came to say.

“Among all the women, God favored you in a very special way.”

Even as a virgin, the angel explained, God's miracle would surely be.

She would become the Mother of Christ; His presence, the people would see.

Shepherds from the fields would leave their flocks to see what God had done.

Wise men would travel from lands afar to visit God's precious Son.

In Bethlehem town, in a cattle stall, all the world surely knew that God sent His only Son because

He loves us so.

Lillian Robbins