



FIRST NEWS

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Volume 45 Issue 12

December 2023

A Word From Pastor John

Proverbs 24:3-4 “By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.”

Going Home

I’ve decided that my theme for December and the Advent Season will be “Home For Christmas”. Now, home means different things to different people. For some it’s where they were born. For some it means where they’ve spent the most years growing up. One guest in our church asked me recently, “I heard an accent when you were preaching. Where is your home?” Without any pause I replied, “My home is just south of town near Excel!” and I meant it.

When new folks come to our church for the first time or they have traveled a distance to be here for a service, I always greet them with, “Welcome Home!” They sometimes think I’m kidding but I’m absolutely serious when I say that. As far as our welcoming spirit, I fully expect that while folks are in God’s House at Monroeville First UMC, they will feel like they have been “home”.

Many of you travel throughout the year which takes you away for weeks and sometimes longer. Doesn’t it feel good to return home to your own bed, your own pillow, and your own routine and your familiar life? Indeed, it’s so comfortable for us to be at home that many folks don’t even want to be away for any more than a few days because they miss “home”.

The bottom line is that home is where you feel loved. That’s where you feel secure and comfortable. That’s where you feel **safe**. Did you know that the word “Sanctuary” literally means “safe place”? Our church should feel like home, not only to those of us who know where the restrooms are, but for everyone who walks through the doors!

In this Season of Advent, and especially during Christmas, many people will come searching for something that is greater than themselves. They will feel a longing to fill their Christmas with something more sacred than presents and lights. The Holy Spirit will guide some of them to our humble church. Let’s ensure that each of us has a welcome of love for every one of God’s children who just want to feel like they’re home. Merry Christmas, and peace to all God’s children.

In Memoriam
Delmas Boyett Ward Jr.
October 29, 2023

In Memoriam
John Bingham Barnett III
November 11, 2023

YTD Giving Received: \$333,052.50
YTD Giving Needed: \$476,256.00

Children & Youth



Keep up to date on upcoming events on our website, Instagram and Facebook pages!



Sunday Evening Schedule:

December 3 / Children 5:00-6:00 , Youth 5:00-6:30

December 10 / Children 5:00-6:00, Youth 5:00-6:30

December 17 / Children 5:00-6:00, Youth 5:00-6:30

Dec 24/ Dec 31 No Meetings

Youth Prayer Breakfasts happen each week at 6:45 in Norman Barnett, it's a great way to connect with one another and God before school. This month we meet December 6 and 13.

Children continue to meet on Sunday evenings at 5:00 and for Sunday school each week at 9:00, a new "break out Sunday School class" for Kindergarten, First and Second graders started in September. What a great time to come to Sunday School!

Children's Ministries

will host Breakfast With Santa at Church After Church on Sunday December 3rd. All are welcome.

HONEYBAKED HAM.

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Honey Baked Ham orders/ payments are due no later than December 6th . Delivery will be in front of Wesley Hall December

Youth will be sponsoring the Merry Mailbox again this year in Norman Barnett Hall, if you have Christmas cards to share with others in our congregation please put them in the alphabetically marked boxes. Donations to this project will benefit youth ministries.

If you would be interested in helping with an Activity for the kids in Vredenburgh on Saturday, **December 9th** - we would like to put together some fun arts and crafts and serve lunch to the children. We need the following: *Youth or adult volunteers for crafts (Christi Dunn) *Volunteers to help cook food (hamburgers & hot dogs) (contact Sage Smith) *Donations of food and drinks Or Donations of \$ to purchase food. (contact Christi Dunn)

December 10th

The Missions Committee will host a bake sale to benefit the children's home. Bakers are needed. Bake sale will be after church during church after church. Contact Karen Robinson or Christi Dunn

Notes from Nancy

Children's Christmas Program

Sing We Now of Christmas

December 3rd

Chancel Choir Cantata

The Glory of Christmas

December 10th



Sing We Now of Christmas

You will want to be in Worship on December 3rd when the children present their Christmas Program!! You will not be able to leave without a **BIG** smile on your face.

2024 FLOWER CALENDAR

The Flower Calendar is posted on the bulletin board outside Norman Barnett Hall Kitchen next to the current Calendar. Please go ahead and sign up to grace our Sanctuary with Altar Flowers during the coming year.

The Glory of Christmas

Make plans to be in Worship on December 10th for the Chancel Choir Cantata! It will be a day for your ears to be filled with wonderful music as we sing "The Glory of Christmas" and you will be able to join us in singing some of the carols that are so familiar. I can offer no better invitation than the words of the composer who wrote and arranged the Cantata you will hear.

"In a panoramic view of Christmas we see the majesty, the color, the sounds, and even the solemnity of this glorious season! We witness the anguish of God's chosen people as it gives way to joy in the fulfillment of an eternal promise – that God would send a Messiah to save them. The entire spectrum of God's love and grace is on full display in the story of Christmas.

"But the message of Christmas is not solely for a people who lived long ago. It is a message that our world needs to hear today. It is for young and old alike, for people of every tribe and nation regardless of one's station in life. The Christmas story is filled with hope, promise, wonder, majesty, and mystery. It is a perpetual reminder that in the darkest moments of life, the brilliance of the eternal Light of Christ has entered our world to guide us on the journey of life and faith.

"So, sing the songs of Christmas! Celebrate its message and embrace the gracious gift from God: Jesus becoming human and living among us for a while so that we might live eternally with our Creator. This is the glory of Christmas!"

Lloyd Larson



Thank You

Dear FUMC Ladies,
On behalf of Joseph and Samantha, I want to thank you for the shower. Samantha was so excited and loved hearing tales of Joseph! You will always hold a special place in our hearts.
With Love, Kathy

The family of Delmas Ward would like to express the heartfelt thanks for the calls, texts, cards, food and support we received during a very difficult time. We are blessed to have such caring and thoughtful members.

Sincerely, Mike, Cindy, Bush and Ward Kennedy.



Birthdays

- 1 Michelle Rainey
- 2 Penelope Hines
- 3 Molly Wiggins
- 4 John Farish Ard; Butch Moran
- 5 Stacey McKenzie; Cal Carter
- 6 Susie Harrigan
- 7 Lauren Black
- 8 Milton Coxwell
- 9 James Boulter
- 10 Kay Dobson
- 12 Carole Dean; Kay English
- 14 Sammie Carter; Max Carter
- 17 Fielding Wiggins
- 20 Virginia McQueen
- 22 Charlie Martens
- 23 Sue Sellers
- 24 Lindsey Coxwell
- 27 Sarah Dyess
- 31 Becky Barnett, Suzanne Nicholas

Wishing You Health, Happiness, and Success. This is the time of year we give thanks and we are so thankful for you and the support you give our program. Hippy of Monroe County

FUMC CHURCH STAFF

Rev. John Woodrow	Senior Pastor
Rev. Pam Barnhardt	Minister of Education
Nancy Carleton	Director of Music Ministries/Organist
Caroline Hardin	Church Business Manager
Christi Dunn	Nurse Director

Regular Church Service

Sunday:

9:00 am Sunday School
 10:05am Morning Worship
 11:00 am Church After Church
 5:00 pm Children/UMYF
 5:00 pm Bible Study

Wednesday:

6:45 am Youth Prayer Breakfast
 9:00 am Wednesday Men
 10:00 am Ladies Bible Study
 4:15 pm Youth Bible Study
 4:30 pm Handbell Rehearsal
 5:15 pm Ladies Bible Study

Monday:

1:00 pm Ladies Sewing Group
 5:30 Chancel Choir Rehearsal

First United Methodist Church services are broadcast by radio every Sunday at 10:05am by WMFC-FM Monroeville 99.3 Livestream each Sunday at 10:05 am Monroeville Fumc-Youth

If you would like for your photo to be included in the new directory but haven't had one made at the church, you may bring one by the office or email to pambarnhardt@gmail.com before December 15th.



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