



First Methodist Church

OF CONOVER

The Weekly Newsletter of First Methodist Church Conover

December 10, 2024

As we step deeper into this beautiful and holy season of Christmas, the world around us seems to grow louder and busier. Stores are bustling with shoppers, calendars fill up with events and parties, and the glow of decorations illuminates our homes and streets. Yet, amid all this activity, it can be easy to lose sight of the quiet miracle at the heart of this season: the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

In John 8:12, Jesus declares, ***"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."*** What a profound promise! Christmas invites us to pause, to look beyond the commercial chaos, and to focus our hearts on the One who came to bring light to our lives and hope to our world.

This December, I want to encourage you to take intentional steps to center your life on Jesus, especially during this busy season. Perhaps this looks like setting aside time each day to read the story of His birth from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Maybe it means finding ways to grow in your relationship with Him, whether through worship, a small group, or acts of service.



As we focus on Jesus, we are also called to share the difference He has made in our lives. How might you bring His light to others this season? Could it be through a kind and compassionate word to someone who's struggling, perhaps an act of generosity to a neighbor, or simply being present with someone who feels alone? In these small but meaningful ways, we reflect the love and light of Christ.

Finally, let me offer you a challenge: consider inviting someone to one of our Christmas Eve worship services (4pm or 6pm). There is no greater gift than to help someone experience the love of Jesus, and a simple invitation can be the first step. Let's fill our sanctuary with joy, hope, and the good news of Christ's birth, welcoming friends, neighbors, and family to celebrate with us.



This Christmas, may you find time to step away from the noise, embrace the light of Christ, and reflect that light to others. My prayer is that this season will be filled with His peace, joy, and hope for you and your loved ones.

Grace and Peace!

Pastor John

PRAYERS, PRAISES AND NEEDS

Let Us Pray...



As an ongoing part of our Nurturing Ministry, we are asking all members of our church to pray for six specific families. Each week we will list a different group of six families as we work our way through our church roll. The families for this week are:

Adam, Melissa, Mackenzie & Tyler Johnson,
Ken & Martha Johnson, Nell Johnson,
Roger, Lisa, Megan & Will Johnson,
Nick Joyner, Corey, Lindsay, Jeb & McCoy Keisler.

A CHRISTMAS INVITATION

Christmas is a time for sharing, spending time with family and friends and our loved ones. Too many spend it alone or just the two of them. Just the same you are loved and are a member of a Special Family.

The Price family would like to invite anyone that would like to join us for Brunch on Christmas Day at 11:30 AM. All you need to bring is yourself. Just come and enjoy the fellowship and spending time with family and friends. I do ask that you let me know, but if you just show up, that is okay too. Our GOD will provide.

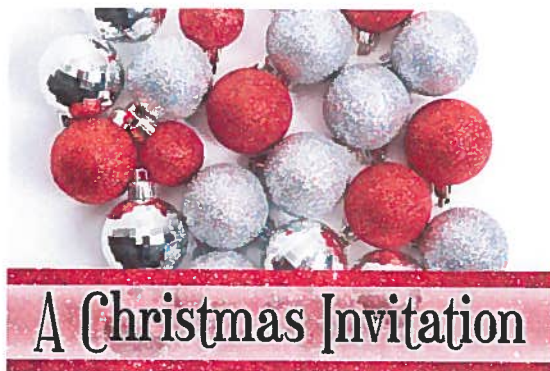
When: December 25th @ 11:30AM

Where: the Home of Anthony Price
2723 Kool Park Road NE, Hickory NC 28601
828-228-6467 (text or leave a voice mail)

Come and join us! "Look what GOD has done."
Anthony Price

P.S.

To all of my church family, there is someone you see every day that will spend Christmas alone, invite them in. "For there is room in your inn".



A Christmas Invitation

IN/OUT OF HOSPITAL

Buck Calloway at Atrium Health - Lincolnton (ICU)
Everest Hedrick (WFBMC - ICU)
Dianne Hollar (At home)
Mark Pennell (At home)

SPREADING CHRISTMAS CHEER

Bags are in the Commons Area for each of our homebound and nursing home residents. Please fill the bags with cards, notes, or sweet tokens of love and cheer so that they can be delivered before Christmas.

The deadline is December 15th.

Bags will be delivered on several occasions when we go out Christmas caroling. **One group will be singing and spreading joy on December 18th at 5:00pm, and another will go on December 19th at 1:00pm (Notice time change).** Plans for a third group will be announced soon. Please plan to join us for this special time together.

Thank you so much for your kindness to these special church members who can't be with us in person.



Greeters for December 15, 2024

8:45am - Powell & Virginia Sigmon; Kim Reed

11:00am - Joe & Tamara Hite

Anyone who wishes to be a greeter, call
Harold Thornburg at (828) 312-1953 - cell;
or home number (828) 464-6826.



NEWS TO USE

ASHURE NEWS

The Ashure Ministry food **request for December** is **Reverse Advent Calendar boxes**. All canned food is useful and appreciated, but cans with pop top lids are important for our homeless clients. These may be placed in the red bins in the hallway between the CFLC and Beth's office along with grocery bags.

Boxes for the Reverse Advent Calendar donations for Ashure Ministry are in the narthex and the CFLC. Please take a box and fill it with the foods listed on the side of the box. Filled boxes are to be returned to Ashure Ministry or FMCC by December 18. Thank you in advance for helping to supply food for others in the county, especially during this blessed season of the year.

Thank you, once again, FMCC!! On December 2, there were 11 volunteers from our church at Ashure Ministry! Not only that, but, during the month of November, there were 17 FMCC volunteers totaling 205.4 hours of service to those in need in our county. You also donated 41 pounds of food in November. WOW!!



PASTOR'S QUIZ

Jesus was born in

- a. Bethlehem of Judaea
- b. Bethlehem of Zebulun
- c. Nazareth
- d. Jerusalem

(The correct answer is on the back of the newsletter.)

STEWARDSHIP REPORT **By Our Presence December 8, 2024**

Sunday School:
91

Worship:
8:45am Service 149
11:00am Service 135
Total 284

God's Tithe & Our Gifts

General Fund \$ 15,718.60
(Needed weekly for budget: \$12,804)

Children's Bank	116.25
"Hoops for Christ"	230.00
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	200.00
Staff Love Offering	<u>2,685.00</u>

Total \$ 18,949.85



Community Christmas Dinner

December 25th

Saint Joseph Catholic Church

(Holy Family Hall)

720 W 13TH Street Newton

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM



Open to individuals and families who would like to enjoy the fellowship of a community Christmas dinner. Take out and delivery are available. To make dinner reservations, schedule a pick-up, or schedule a delivery, please call: 828-465-2878

Deadline for reservations is December 20th.

First Methodist Church
410 First Avenue North
Conover, NC 28613
Return Service Requested

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Conover, NC

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous contribution to the North Carolina Global Methodist Conference for your support of our brothers and sisters in Western North Carolina in the wake of Hurricane Helene. Your contribution of \$3,000.00 and your prayers are greatly appreciated!

With your help we have been able to support many relief efforts such as feeding people when food banks and community kitchens had been destroyed, providing support to Eight Days of Hope for food and supply help, assisting families at risk of losing their homes, helping to build temporary housing, clearing closed roadways, and helping people to clean up and fix damaged homes.

The road to recovery will be long, and we couldn't do it without you. Thanks again for your support!

Blessings in Christ,

The North Carolina Global Methodist
Conference Leadership Team

Answer to this week's Pastor's Quiz:

a. Bethlehem of Judaea
(Matthew 2:1)

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor	Rev. John Woods pastor@fmconover.org (828) 464-4635 (336) 480-4550 - cell 208 2nd St NE, Conover
Office Administrator / Financial Secretary	Robin Mays office@fmconover.org
Coordinator of Lay Ministries	Beth Woods woods777@aol.com (336) 480-4551 - cell
Music Director/Choir	Jon Rogers jsrogers99@gmail.com (828) 244-7019
Music Director/Praise Team/ Pianist	Shannon Rogers srog101@gmail.com (828) 244-6124
Organist	Kevin Haney khaney01@gmail.com (704) 914-6510
Preschool Director	Julie Robinson (828) 466-3158 preschool@fmconover.org
Lead Nursery Worker	Pilar Tobar
Custodian	Luisa Toro Bryan
Church Office	(828) 464-4635
Website:	www.fmconover.org

EVEN MORE NEWS TO USE



Romans 12:15 encourages believers to "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." The church is the best place to find comfort and strength in the face of life's difficulties. Personal stories of God's provision can inspire and encourage. Knowing that others are walking the journey with you or have walked it ahead of you brings hope and comfort. Our church family is a community in which this happens daily. You are faithful to support your brothers and sisters in Christ through

prayer, visits, cards and phone calls. But sometimes, concerns are not known, so don't get the support needed.

In late January, we will be launching a group of new ministries (Heartfelt Ministries) to help improve communication of prayer needs and to provide additional means of support to all our family. More information will be given in the next few weeks, so be watching for that. Initial plans include a regularly meeting prayer group, areas in the church building designated for prayer and for leaving prayer requests, some online or telephone options for prayer requests, a grief support group and other support ministries.

Right now, we would like to hear from you... what would YOU like this ministry to look like? Would you be interested in participating in some part of it? Most of all, would you please PRAY? Pray that God will call and equip those who will be providing leadership. Pray for discernment about what experiences will help participants to grow in their faith. Pray for GOD to be honored and glorified in all that we do!

If you'd like to share your thoughts, please contact Beth Woods at 336 480-4551 or woods777@aol.com.

Fellowship meal with a special Christmas presentation from our children and youth!



We will enjoy fellowship over a meal (chicken pie and winter squash - please bring desserts), and after dinner you will be treated to a special Christmas presentation from our children and youth. It will be a "don't miss!" kind of night!

*** Any children or youth who would like to participate, please come at 4:30 on the 14th so we can prepare.

HEY, MORE NEWS TO USE

HOOPS FOR CHRIST YOUTH BASKETBALL LEAGUE

Here's a little bit of interesting info on our Hoops for Christ Youth Basketball ministry...

We have 66 players divided into eight teams with Biblical team names: Psalms, Disciples, Kings, Proverbs, Exodus,

Revelation, Judges, and Genesis. Four teams are K-2nd grade players and four teams are 3rd – 6th grade.

Of the 66 players, 14 have played 3 or more years with us, 29 have played 1-2 years and 23 are brand new team members! Of the 66 players, 55 are NOT regular attenders or members of our church. That's the HUGE level of outreach that this program provides into our community! Of the 66 players, 22 have a Conover address. The other 44 come from Hickory, Newton, Catawba and even as far as Lincolnton and Statesville.

We have 2 or 3 coaches per team and several other youth and adults who help run this ministry every week. The coaches will be teaching basketball skills along with sharing prayers, scripture and devotionals every week. The kids have memory verses for each week of practice and play. Solid Biblical teaching is interwoven into every part of this program. It's NOT just about basketball!

We provide a play area for siblings and other children when they aren't on the court. We provide hospitality to the players through a snack with each game. We provide hospitality to the spectators with free coffee and concessions throughout all the games. (Still looking for volunteers to help provide this for the games after Christmas!)

And we provide encouragement and witness to the spectators by sharing a short (3-5 minute) devotional during half-time for each game. (4 games per Saturday). Would you be willing to do this one Saturday? Be the face and voice of Christ for our community?

Games will be on Saturdays: December 14 & 21; January 11, 18, and 25; and February 1.

Mark your calendars and plan to come cheer for these players at a few of their games! It's the best free fun you can find on a Saturday morning! Most of all, pray for this ministry... the coaches, players, families, and all who will be impacted.

Please let me know if you are willing to help. Beth (336) 480-4551 or woods777@aol.com



Sun, Dec 15, 5:00-7:00 Christmas party in the youth room in the CFLC– Come for a fun evening of making cookies, playing games (winning prizes!) and fellowship! Bring a friend!

Fri. Dec. 20 4:30 - 8:00 pm OUR CHRISTMAS GIFT TO PARENTS.

Drop your kids (age 2-6th grade) off in the CFLC for a night of food, fun, games, and a movie while you finish Christmas shopping or wrapping! Or if you are super efficient and finished with all that (I want to know your secret...), just have an evening to relax!

Kids are welcome in pajamas, with pillows and blankets for lounging to watch a movie. We'll provide dinner and entertainment from 4:30-8:00! RSVPs are appreciated! Beth Woods 336-480-4551.



DON'T FORGET OUR MEMBERS IN NURSING FACILITIES AND OUR HOMEBOUND

Rev. Dixon Adams - TerraBella Newton (Room B7)
1088 Radio Station Road, Newton, NC 28658

Dottie Aycock-Harris - Terra Bella Newton (Room A5&6)
1088 Radio Station Road, Newton, NC 28658
(704) 460-4919 - Ron's cell phone
noghost@bellsouth.net - email address



James Davis - Abernethy Laurels (Memory Care Center)
Mail to: Jeanette Davis
210 Leonard Avenue, Newton, NC 28658

Nell Johnson - Kingston Residence
904 2nd Street NE, Apt. 109, Hickory, NC 28601
(828) 328-9962 - landline (828) 228-7396 - cell

Margaret Kilpatrick - Abernethy Laurels (Memory Care) (Room 2010)
102 Leonard Avenue, Newton, NC 28658

Robert Matthews - Heritage Care (Room 16)
3430 Lester Street, Conover, NC 28613

Rick Parker - Catawba Valley Assisted Living (Room 107)
4174 Shook Road, Claremont, NC 28610
(828) 381-4988 - Rick's cell (828) 381-7328 - Linda's cell

Mary Ann Simpson - Kingston Residence (Room 214)
904 2nd Street NE, Apt. 109, Hickory, NC 28601

Sybil Windsor - TerraBella Newton (Room C13)
1088 Radio Station Road, Newton, NC 28658



Lee Moritz, Sr. - 103 County Home Road, Conover, NC 28613
(828) 464-3383

Dolores Setzer - PO Box 1237, Conover, NC 28613
(828) 256-1421

If you know of any members that should be added to our list, please contact the church office at
(828) 464-4635.