

Dear Friends,

very year at this time, our mailboxes are filled with advertisements promoting black Friday bargains and Christmas sales. We travel from store to store looking for the perfect gift for that special someone. We put up our lights, decorate our trees and attempt to create the perfect Christmas. Maybe we are trying to recapture the magic of our childhoods. Maybe we are trying to recreate Christmas for ourselves. Whatever the circumstance may be, for most of us, the usual happens. When it is all said and done, we are left with the "day after" feeling. Christmas fails to live up to our warm memories and unrealistic expectations. In the end, we are left wondering what it is that we have missed.

Maybe there is more to Christmas than what it has become. Maybe Christmas is not so much about what we create but more about being recreated. Christmas is about experiencing the hope, peace, joy, and love that only God can offer. Maybe Christmas is more about finding ourselves surrounded by God's love than it is anything else that we dream. Christmas is a time to reconnect with our families and our faith.

No matter where life's journey has taken you, Christmas is a time to come home. This year, we invite you to connect with your church family and with God by celebrating God's gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love in our lives. So, "Come Home for Christmas" and experience the true meaning and spirit of the season!

Blessings,

Michael

Pastor Mike

#### **WEEKLY STANDING EVENTS**

#### SUNDAYS

- WORSHIP 8:30 & 11:00 AM
- SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM
- JESUS AND ME 11:00 AM (EXCEPT COMMUNION SUNDAY)
- MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH 5:30 PM
- HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH 7:15 PM

#### **MONDAYS**

- PRESCHOOL 9:00 AM (4 YEAR OLD)
- PRESCHOOL 9:30 AM (3 YEAR OLD)
- ACTIVE FOR LIFE 10:00 AM (ROOM 110)
- BOY/CUB SCOUTS 6:30 PM

#### **TUESDAYS**

- PRESCHOOL 9:00 AM (4 YEAR OLD)
- PRESCHOOL 9:30 AM (3 YEAR OLD)
- WALKING 3:30 PM (EVERYONE WELCOME)

#### **WEDNESDAYS**

- PRESCHOOL 9:00 AM (4 YEAR OLD)
- PRESCHOOL 9:30 AM (3 YEAR OLD)
- ACTIVE FOR LIFE 10:00 AM (ROOM 110)
- WALKING 3:30 PM (EVERYONE WELCOME)
- TREBLE MAKERS REHEARSAL 4:30 PM
- GIRL SCOUTS 6:00 PM
- BAND REHEARAL 6:15 PM
- CHOIR REHEARSAL 7:00 PM
- ADULT BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM (LIBRARY)
- YOUTH HANGOUT 7:00 PM

#### **THURSDAYS**

- PRESCHOOL 9:00 AM (4 YEAR OLD)
- PRESCHOOL 9:30 AM (3 YEAR OLD)
- ACTIVE FOR LIFE 10:00 AM (ROOM 110)
- WALKING 3:30 PM (EVERYONE WELCOME)

#### **FRIDAYS**

- NA MEETING 7:00 PM, LIBRARY
- AA MEETING 8:00 PM, ROOM 250-A
- AL ANON MEETING 8:00 PM, ROOM 200





### Mark Your Calendar

#### 12-01

 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECORATED THE CHURCH

#### 12-02

Rang Bells at Kroger

#### 12-08

CHRISTMAS CAROLING - 3:00 PM (MEET @ CHURCH)

#### 12-10 & 11

UMW Making Candy in Kitchen - 9:00 am

#### 12-15

 Church Christmas Dinner & Presentation by WV Treble Maker's Choir after Dinner - 5:00 pm

#### 12-17

Воок Сьив - Room 110 - 1:00 рм

#### 12-18

LIVE NATIVITY - YOUTH - 7:00 PM (FRONT CHURCH LAWN)

#### 12-19

Preschool Christmas Program - 9:30 am

#### 12-22

CHRISTMAS CANTATA - 11:00 SERVICE ONLY

#### 12-24

- CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES 5:00 & 7:30 PM
- TAKING CHRISTMAS INTO OUR COMMUNITY -FOLLOWING THE 7:30 PM SERVICE

#### 12-25

CHRISTMAS DAY - CELEBRATION OF CHRIST'S BIRTH



# Finding Our Place at the Manger

AN ADVENT STUDY Family Connection & Koinonia Classes

The see the nativity scene throughout the Advent season, on greeting cards, under Christmas trees, or brightly illuminated on the lawns of public places. This scene depicts a romanticized version of Jesus' birth narratives found in Matthew and Luke, complete with wise men who traveled long distances to join the shepherds and holy family. Yet these paintings or figurines can lead to a glossed-over experience of the individual characters and their importance in our lives.

The purpose of this study is to look beyond the presentation of the nativity scene so that participants can find their place at the manger. Each session of this four-session study will examine what we know about those who were there to witness the birth of Jesus: Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men. Throughout each session, participants will not only look at these characters in Scripture but also how they speak to us in our modern context so that we may find where we fit in as we await the joy of Jesus' birth.



You are invited to come and join the Family Connection and Koinonia Sunday School classes as we meet together for Advent Study – Finding Our Place at the Manger.

Join us in Room 250 on Sunday mornings at 9:45 as each of us find our place at the manger.

## Morning has Broken!

By Joe McCullough

AND like the *first* morning, "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

AS we enter the Advent season, we "wait with hope; welcome with love; watch with joy; and want to walk in peace." The way is prepared for us. We want to walk as Children of the Light. We want to follow Jesus. I hope you can take advantage of the path that's prepared for you as we celebrate the birth of our king and savior. Then look with joy and wonder to His return!

WE'VE decorated the church. (Thanks to all who came out Sunday to decorate - it looks BEAUTIFUL!) The children are preparing, the choir is practicing, the anticipation is growing!

So, "Hanging the Greens" took place on Dec. 1st, and the church does look AMAZING!. The Youth decorated their space and many others came and helped with putting up trees and decorations. Thank you for all you did to beatify our church for this glorious season. You're really appreciated.

Did you hear the bells ring? Thank you to all St. John "ringers' who helped fill the red bucket for Salvation Army yesterday, Monday, Dec. 2nd at Kroger.

We're calling out all cookie-makers and carol singers to join us on **Sunday afternoon**, **Dec. 8**<sup>th</sup> to "carol" to our shut-ins and the local nursing homes. It doesn't matter if you can't carry a tune in a bucket. You can certainly share the warmth and joy of the season!

Oh, my goodness - the United Methodist Women will be making CANDY Tuesday and Wednesday, December 11th and 12th at 9:00 am each day!! If you're interested in helping out, please sign up at the Welcome Desk. The candy should be available for purchase on Sunday, December 15th in the lower level of the church.

Sunday, Dec. 15th, St. John will host our annual church dinner. We'll open the doors to the gym at 5pm and the feasting will begin soon after. We encourage you to invite friends and neighbors to join us

for this great time of food, fun and fellowship. The church will provide turkey, ham, bread and drinks. We ask you to bring two side-dishes and a dessert. Bon appetit!

After about an hour into our Church Christmas dinner, the Putnam County Treblemakers Children's Choir will present a concert in the Sanctuary. You certainly don't want to miss hearing and seeing them present beautiful Christmas songs.

Wednesday, Dec. 18th at 7pm, a reenactment of the live Nativity will be presented on the front lawn of the church made up of members of the St. John Youth. You're invited to come and witness a live telling of our Savior's birth.

Thursday, December 19th will be St. John's PRESCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM at 9:30am in the sanctuary. Ms. Joy, Ms. Julie, Ms. Pam and Ms. Mechelle have done an excellent job getting the children prepared for their program. Be sure to join us - invite a friend.

Our Choir Christmas Cantata, "Always a King", will be presented on Sunday, December 22nd at the 11:00am service only. This is a beautiful and inspirational piece of work - you will certainly want to bring your family and friends.

This year, there will be **two Christmas Eve** candlelight services, the first at **5pm**; the second at **7:30pm**. A new tradition started a couple years ago as members of the St. John congregation delivered donuts as a treat for those who found themselves having to work on Christmas Eve, such as the police, firemen, hospital and care-facility workers. **All spots are taken for deliveries**.

So, there's the lowdown on a *lot*, certainly not all, of the things happening as we enter the "holiday" season. What a blessing it is to be able to go out into the world to deliver the Good News: Christ is born! We pray that you will be blessed by the Spirit and the joy, the love and the expectation that is this most wonderful time of the year. God bless us, everyone!

## The Giving Tree

## How We Wrapped Up Christmas for Putnam County Students

he Giving Tree Program reaches out to local Putnam County students who are in need of some extra Christmas cheer. These students were identified by school counselors. Sadly, some of the students are displaced from their homes and parents due to unfortunate family circumstances.

The students needs and wishes were shared with our Outreach ministry.

At the end of October the Giving Tree was put in the Narthex, but it wasn't decorated. St. John members and friends took need and wish lists to purchase gifts or donated funds to buy gifts and volunteered their time to shop and wrap gifts. When they did any of these things, an ornament was placed on the tree.

The tree was quickly filled with ornaments and gifts began to fill under the tree!

On December 1st there was a luncheon and wrapping party to wrap gifts and get the gifts bagged and ready to transport to the area schools.



This year our St. John family and friends in the community provided Christmas for 64 students! We also were able to purchase displaced students duffle-like bags and blankets.

The Outreach Ministry would like to thank the congregation for their overwhelming generosity and time! Your giving hearts put love into action to provide Christmas for these students.

THANK YOU!!!

Also, thank each of you who donated cookies for our Putnam County
Teachers and Staff.



#### St. John United Methodist Church

WV ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF THE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

#### SENIOR PASTOR

Rev. Michael Q. Atkinson

#### **WORSHIP MINISTER**

Joe McCullough

#### **MUSIC MNISTER**

Jamie Miller

#### **DIRECTOR of YOUTH MINISTERIES**

Kyle Smith

#### CHORAL ACCOMPANIST

Christi Miller

#### DIRECTOR of PRESCHOOL

Joy Spratt

#### VISITATION/COUNSELING MINISTER

Rev. Robert 'Bob' Hill

#### DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH

Jennifer Beam

#### **DIRECTOR OF STEPHEN MINISTRIES**

Karen Kinder

#### **OFFICE MANAGER**

Kaye Morton

#### MISSION

Introducing people to Jesus, Growing as disciples together

#### OFFICE HOURS

10:00 am - 2:00 pm Monday thru Thursday

4536 TEAYS VALLEY ROAD SCOTT DEPOT, WV 25560

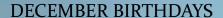
304-757-6343

SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:30 am and 11:00 am

#### **DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

Jim & Judy Justice	12/06
Rusty & Jackie Raines	12/19
Pat & Tammy Ward	12/19
Mike & Joy Spratt	12/22
Earlie & Margaret Stovall	12/22
Jim & Terri Dodrill	12/31



Lance Carney	12/03
Eli Chambers	12/05
Jack Clark	12/05
Alicia Walton	12/07
Judy Justice	12/08
Rev. Bob Hill	12/09
Sarah Martin	12/11
William Goode	12/13
Bryce Walton	12/15
Nora Dye	12/17
Dave Cramer	12/20
Gary Kinder	12/20
Michael Harvey	12/22
Calleigh Bach	12/22
Holly Bach	12/22
Vicki Murphy	12/23
Collette Vinson	12/23
Wilma McClung	12/25
William Galyean	12/27
Nora Knox	12/30
Lucille Meadows	12/31
<b>X</b>	

#### **Community BOOK CLUB**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1:00 PM, in Room 210

You are invited to join us as we discuss "The Christmas Box", by Richard Paul Evans. It is Evans's story: his own spiritual journey and stories of people he encountered along the way -- miraculous stories of healing and divinity that often defy explanation.

Please come and share in the adventure of unfolding the beautiful stories held within these pages.

Peggy Kuhl - 304-638-3659



#### **CHRISTMAS for BURLINGTON CHILDREN**

Each year St. John UMC provides financial support to the residents at the Burlington Beckley Center during the Christmas season. There are 30 children who need items for Christmas. If you would like to give a gift for children who are a part of this ministry, please put your gift in the offering plate and mark your envelopes accordingly. Miles of Pennies will support this ministry.



JOIN US! We'll meet at the church at 3 pm, then make our way to numerous places to take cookies and joy to those who are unable to worship with us. Please sign up at the Welcome Desk. Thank you!

## CHURCH CHRISTMAS DINNER 8 WV TREBLE MAKERS CHIOR PRESENTATION

Sunday, December 15th from 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm (in the Church Gymnasium - Choir presentation in the sanctuary)

"It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year . . Celebrating Christ's birth with our church family - a great time of fun, food and fellowship!"

Don't miss this wonderful occasion!

- Meat, Bread and Beverages are provided
- Please bring Two Sides and One Dessert (per family)

#### **COMMUNITY CUPBOARD**

For December and January, St. John's collection assignment for the Community Cupboard:

<u>Children's Goodies</u>, individually wrapped snacks like crackers, cookies, fruit rope, pudding cups etc...

- Other non-perishable foods of your choice are always appreciated.
- Toiletries needed include: Shampoo, deodorant and toothpaste.
- Donated items can be placed in the collection basket at the lower entrance of our church.

Thank you, St. John Outreach Ministry for helping many families enjoy a Thanksgiving meal.



## **Operation Christmas Child**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIVING OF 75 SHOE BOXES FOR CHILDREN ALL OVER THE WORLD!!



## It Really *IS* the Most Wonderful Time of Year

Greetings Everyone,

December is upon us and Christmas is already in the air! It's amazing to think that we are just a month away from it being 2020. The youth have been as busy and active as ever. We had our annual lock-in just a couple weeks ago with about 40 youth in attendance. We were also able to join Heart and Hand in a food distribution to the needy one cold Saturday morning (picture of two of our youth shown here).

December will be another eventful month for the youth. We helped with the Hanging of the Greens on Dec 1, we will go caroling with the church on the 8<sup>th</sup>, present a live nativity on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and have our Christmas party on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will finally get to take a little bit of a breath and prepare for the new year to arrive.

Merry Christmas, Kyle Smith



The YOUTH of St. John have had a wonderful year and many opportunities to minister and share Christ with other youth.

Thank you, our friends and family of St. John, for your prayers and support!

We Love YOU!

#### Youth Schedule

Dec. 8 Christmas Caroling

Dec. 15 Church Christmas Dinner

Dec. 18 Live Nativity

Dec. 22 Youth Christmas Party

### Birthday Gifts go to Bites for Bitty Ones



hat an amazing gesture from Gwen Fisher, who asked her friends to bring food and snacks for Bites for Bitty Ones in lieu of birthday gifts for her 13th birthday. This shows such great representation for teens in her agegroup of helping others.

Thank you, Gwen, for thinking of others on your special day. Oh, and Happy Belated Birthday!

Also, thank you, St. John, for your continued support, prayers and giving.

God Bless you and may everyone have a most Blessed and Joyful Christmas!!



It was a Silent Night - it was a Holy Night - and the babe in the Manger changed the world - Forever!

In the midst of your hectic Christmas Season, pause to refresh your mind, body, soul and spirit:

- Rekindle your connection to the Christ of Christmas and find hope for a lifetime.
- Lay down your endless Christmas-to-do list and receive what Jesus has already done.
- Heal your heartache by embracing the God who is always near you, always for you, and always in you.

### Preschooler's: How to Cook a Turkey

#### Results not guaranteed!

What is the best way to find and fix a turkey. There are so many suggestions.

It can be very tricky. We ask our preschoolers - your children for their recommendations. The results are not guaranteed.

<u>Kennedy</u> - We get our turkey at the farm. My daddy, Rudy, put it in the barn. I don't want to eat it. It is my pet. But if you find another turkey, put it in the stove 35 degrees for 35 minutes.

<u>Graham</u> - You can get a turkey at Walmart. It may already be cooked. You can put flour on the turkey, add cheese and put salad around turkey. Bake one minute on low. It is good with cookies, cupcakes, brownies and crackers.

<u>Addilyn</u> - You can get a turkey on my farm in the outside gate. It is in Amish country. If I leave it open, the turkeys come in. The Amish do not eat turkey. But, I would pull the feathers off, cook in oven on high for 30 minutes. I like chocolate turkey best - it comes in a box - with pumpkin pie. Uncle Joe, Taylor, Grandpa and Nana eat with us.

<u>Luke</u> - The turkey is hiding in the leaves. Maybe we could keep it as a pet. If we must cook a turkey, put in in the oven on cool for 1 minute. Serve with rice and macaroni and cheese.

<u>Cass</u> - Find a turkey hiding in the woods. Catch the turkey. Put it in the oven on high for 5 minutes. I like green peas, chicken and cake.

<u>Sophia</u> - The turkey is flying away. Catch it - chop it up - put it in oven on real high for 30 seconds. You must add lemons, sugar and salt.

<u>Owen</u> - I don't know where to get a turkey. I don't know how to cook a turkey. Maybe try on low for 10 minutes. Can we just eat hamburgers and ice cream?

<u>Annie</u> - The turkeys are on the farm. A farmer will catch it for you. Then stuff it with turkey, pancakes, strawberries and lollipops. Cook for 20 minutes on Hot.

<u>Sawyer</u> - Just get a turkey at the grocery store. Cook it by putting in oven at 51 degrees for 30 seconds. It will taste great with cookies, ice cream, tea and hot chocolate.

**Evy** - Look outside on a farm. Put it in a bag. Bake it 1,000 degrees for one hour. You may want to add pepper, sale, b-b-que with gummy worms and cupcakes.

Choose your favorite Holiday feast. Prepare carefully. Enjoy and be Thankful someone else must find the perfect turkey and prepare it.



















### Sunday School

We have a SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS for ALL AGES!

Please consider becoming a part of our Sunday School Ministry. We encourage you to visit any number of classes until you find the best fit for you.

### Stephen Ministry

If you are interested in becoming a Stephen Minister, please contact Pastor Michael, 304-757-6343, or Judy or Bob Hill 304-760-8083, or Karen Kinder at 304-549-1905.

## United Methodist Women are making CANDY!!

CHRISTMAS CANDY will be available for you to purchase on Sunday, Dec. 15th.

HARD CANDY
PEANUTBUTTER BALLS
PEPPERMINT BARK CANDY

Be sure to stop by and get your candy before it's all gone!! YUM, YUM, YUM.

See Peggy Kuhl if you need more information 304-638-3659.

## Preschool Christmas Program

ou are invited to join us on Thursday, December 19th at 9:30 am in the church sanctuary for our Annual Preschool Children's Christmas Program.

We are excited to present the story of Christmas to the parents, grandparents and church family.

This has been a great year for our Preschool - we continue growing in the number of students attending - and growing in relationships with those whom we serve. How blessed we are - and how thankful we are for our church family, who is always there for us.

May God bless each of you during this most holy time of year.

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Ms. Joy, Ms. Julie, Ms. Pam and Ms. Mechelle



### Taking Christmas into our Community

Immediately following our 7:30 pm Christmas Eve Service we'll be taking Donuts to those who have to work on Christmas Eve, as we share the love of Jesus and let them know their labor and services are appreciated.

All the spots have been filled and we are so thankful for those who signed up to deliver.

Someone from the Outreach or UMW Ministry will contact you to let you know the destination of your delivery.

Thank You and May God Richly Bless Each of You!