



**First United Methodist**  
 FAITH FIRST. FAMILIES FIRST. ANDERSON FIRST.

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**CHRISTMAS**  
 \* \* \*  
**BEGINS WITH**  
 \* \* \*  
**CHRIST**



# THE VOICE

**A Newsletter of First United Methodist**



## LESSONS AND CAROLS

**Sunday, December 7 at 10 a.m.**

A spectacular worship experience of scripture and music as we prepare to receive Christ anew! Bring neighbors, family and friends! The Sanctuary Choir, Wesley Chorale and Chamber Orchestra will bring a beautiful service of music and readings for all to be fully immersed in the Christmas season. This is a wonderful service to invite friends and other guests.



## BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

**Saturday, December 20 at 2 p.m.**

This service is for those for whom these long nights remind them of separation from loved ones, burdens of illness, anxiety or fear or the loneliness of being alone. This reflective service helps us focus on the Healing and Light of Christ.

Elizabeth Murray-Sherron and Michele Murray will offer their beautiful selections on the violin and piano.



## CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE & HOLY COMMUNION

**December 24 at 7 p.m.**

Keep Christ as a part of your Christmas! Join us for special music, candles, children's message, inspirational worship, and Holy Communion all in the beautiful setting of the sanctuary.

# Adult Ministries

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE – December 2025

### ADVENT: PREPARE HIM ROOM

Let us prepare our hearts for Christ, embracing his presence as we rediscover the hope, joy, peace, and love that only Christ brings. Together, let's make this Christmas a true celebration of Jesus.

- December 7            LESSONS & CAROLS  
Preparing for Peace Monologue: Chris Tupling  
*No Communion*  
Sanctuary Choir, Wesley Chorale &  
Chamber Orchestra
- December 14            THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
Preparing for Joy Monologue: Marissa Childs  
Luke 2:8-20 (NLT)  
Prepare Him Room: Spreading Joy  
Music: Wesley Bells
- Sat. Dec. 20 @ 2 p.m. Blue Christmas Service
- December 21            FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
Preparing for Love Monologue: Chris Taylor  
Romans 1:3-6 (NLT); Matthew 1:18-25 (NIV)  
Prepare Him Room: Reflecting Love  
Music: Alpha Brass
- Wed. Dec. 24            CHRISTMAS EVE – 7 p.m.  
Holy Communion  
The Lord Has Come!
- Dec. 25-26 Church office closed for Christmas
- December 28            1<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS  
Pastor Brian White preaching  
Music: Brass Quintet
- Jan. 4 @ 10 a.m. Snowballs of Hope following worship

### CHURCH HISTORIAN

In compliance with the United Methodist General Conference: Commission on Archives and History, this church now has a Church Historian who will preserve its records and historic "treasures," in order to tell the story of our past and inspire the congregation in the future. We celebrate that God has called and Matt McClintick responded, "yes" to serve as the Anderson First UMC historian. For questions or contributions contact Matt McClintick through the church office, 765-643-6977.

The General Commission on Archives and History is in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, which establishes the commission and outlines its duties — to collect, preserve, and make accessible the historical records of the conference and local churches.

The Local Church Historian is also included with the responsibilities of the commission at the local level. To learn more go to the INUMC website for the Commission on Archives and History:  
<https://www.inumc.org/commission-on-archives-history/>

### THANK YOU

We are deeply grateful for Debbie Millikan and Team for many hours and talents they used to decorate the sanctuary and church for the Advent/Christmas season! While you were the ones responsible for hanging lights that shine, it is the Light of Jesus Christ shining in your lives that fills our church with warmth and inspiration. You have blessed us!



# Outreach Ministries

## OUTREACH NEWS

Our Outreach ministries have so much to be thankful for this season. Johanne Coleson organizes Our Buddy Bag team beautifully. Buddy Bags has our dedicated church team who show up faithfully to pack nutritious snacks for those struggling with food insecurity at Anderson Elementary. We are blessed to have Central Christian Church participate in this project bi-monthly as well. Helping Hands Non-Food Pantry has our own faithful volunteers who assist Linda Verhulst who plans, purchases and organizes this ministry with caring compassion and stewardship. We have our own church teams and community teams who choose to serve "with cheerful hearts" to our downtown Community Cafe guests. We also have volunteers who attend weekly and assist with other necessary tasks involved in Community Cafe and Food at First. All ministries continue to grow due to the prayerful support of you, our caring congregation. This year, each of our ministries has received grants from the community in addition to your kind contributions. We continue to feed "the least of these" by God's grace and the obedience of those who listen to His voice. The Christmas offerings are designated to help fund these ministries. 2 Corinthians 9:7, "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Thank you for your time, energy, and concern which keeps these ministries alive and helps them thrive.

Utility Assistance continues with our dedicated team who works diligently to assist our guests with the goal of warding off a costly disconnection. We've served increasing numbers this quarter and continue to provide additional resources to aide them in multiple ways.

Susan and David Selby  
Outreach Coordinators

## HELPING HANDS NON-FOOD PANTRY

We were able to serve 101 people at our November 12<sup>th</sup> Helping Hands Non-Food Pantry, which we were very happy to do. The items that we gave to each person included two large rolls of toilet paper, a tube of toothpaste, a toothbrush, deodorant for a man or woman, dish soap and a roll of paper towels. We continue to have many regulars attend, as well as people who have come for the first time. Mo of the first timers are coming to us after they have attended the Utility Assistance program. We continue to let each person who comes to our Pantry know the date of the next Pantry, which is the second Wednesday of each month, and that the hours we are open are 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. We are grateful for the donations from our Congregation, which helps us serve more people. Our congregation is a blessing not only to us, but to those we serve.

Our next Helping Hands Non-food Pantry is schedule for December 10, 2025 from 9:00 AM to 11:00 ANM. For that Pantry, we e requesting donations of toilet paper, shampoo and/or lotion. Your donations help us serve more people and we appreciate them very much. Thank you!

Sincerely—Linda Verhulst, Juanita Slattery, Karen Ambler

# Church News

## POINSETTIAS

Poinsettias may be purchased for \$15 in honor or memory of a loved one  
**The deadline is December 2.** Forms are at the Welcome Center.

## J.O.Y. LUNCH December 19

Come and enjoy a Festival of Christmas with special music by Park Place Church of God Ladies' Choir with Pastor Don Deena Johnson. Our celebrating begins at 11:30 with the Sorority's Christmas Meal. Cost for our lunch and program is \$12 and may be paid upon arrival. Reserve your place at the table by Wed. Dec. 17.

## CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

Christmas Music sets the tone for the season!

AACC/YC Winter Concert  
Sunday, Dec. 7 @ 7 p.m.  
(Anderson Area Children's Choir and Youth Chorale)

Alpha Brass & the Directors Jazz Orchestra Christmas Concert  
Sunday, Dec. 14 at 3 p.m. in sanctuary  
Come and enjoy some of the BEST music around!

## ADVENT STUDIES *continue*

*A Child Is Born:*  
*A Beginner's Guide to Nativity Stories*  
Nov. 24 – Dec. 15, 10:30 a.m. in N.S. Parlor  
In-person and by Zoom  
Led by Pastor Brian White  
AND  
*How Jesus Brings Hope, Peace, Joy & Love*  
Nov. 24 – Dec. 15, 6 p.m. in N.S. Parlor  
Led by Pastor Corinne Boruff  
ALL ARE WELCOME!

## GATEWAY CHRISTMAS GIFTS

November began the beginning of opportunities for assisting with Christmas gifts for the Gateway children. The Angel Tree will be available in the downstairs Gateway office (G109). You may call, email or drop by for your preference of children's items needed. Also, envelopes will be provided in the outside of our sanctuary, as they were last year, for anyone that would like to financially donate to an "Angel."

Deadline for gifts and donation envelopes is **December 10.**

### **2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES**

If you would like to have offering envelopes for 2026 giving, please let Heather Ashton know as soon as possible at [heather@andersonfirst.org](mailto:heather@andersonfirst.org) or 764-643-6977. We want to accommodate everyone in whatever way you prefer to give.

### **ONLINE GIVING**

is available and a convenient way to make your gift to the church regularly. On the website ([www.andersonfirst.org](http://www.andersonfirst.org)) go to the "GIVE" and follow the instructions. It is easy and no envelopes necessary!

### **PRIMROSE CONGREGATION**

Every week Anderson First leads worship at Primrose Retirement Community on Cross Street. With a congregation that averages 20 we sing together, pray, hear scripture, hear a message and receive communion. Pastor Corinne Boruff and Ellen Rhoades are now providing weekly messages and music. Guests are welcome any Sunday at 2 p.m. in the second floor activity room. Your love and support for this congregation is felt deeply! Sign Christmas cards for this congregation found on a table in the narthex. Regular Primrose Congregation updates will be coming in the future!

### **2025 FINANCIAL PLEDGES**

If you have met your pledge or exceeded your promise for 2025,  
**WE ARE TRULY GRATEFUL!**

Our children are learning about God, youth are growing in Christ, young adults are sharing Christian fellowship, adults are being fed through study and fellowship, the needy are receiving care, God is being praised in worship, and our outreach knows no boundaries, thanks to you! If you have not met your 2025 promised giving yet, please consider making that current before the end of the year. What you have given and will continue to give furthers God's kingdom on earth!



You are such a blessing in my life! Thank you for being a vital part of the life of this church, and of my life. Your wisdom, your vision, and your passions help me grow in my faith journey. I am privileged to serve as your senior pastor at Anderson First UMC. With your participation we continue to develop new ways to carry on God's work and worship. Life can be challenging for many of us which may mean that Christmas is less "Merry" than in years past. The knowledge that God is present loving us unconditionally puts the "Merry" in my Christmas and hopefully yours. "May the best present you receive this year be the presence of Christ-with-you, Emmanuel."

**Merry Christmas and Blessings in the New Year!**

*Love, Corinne*

### **FIRST KIDS MOVIE NIGHT**

Lights, Camera...MOVIE NIGHT

Get ready for a festive Movie Night at Anderson First Kids on Wednesday, December 10th!. We're inviting all kids to come in their comfiest pajamas and bring along some pillows and blankets to get cozy. We'll watch a Christmas movie and enjoy hot chocolate together. We can't wait to hang out with you on Wednesday from 6 to 8 in the fireplace Room!

### **POPARTS AND PJS**

Ditch the debates over "what to wear" and what's for breakfast', and join us for the first Kids Poptarts and PJs party instead! On December 21st, both kids and adults are invited to come dressed in their pajamas as we celebrate the wonderful gift of Jesus with Poptarts, games, and crafts during our 10 AM Sunday morning First Kids programming.

### **AFS MIDWEEK**

AFS Midweek takes place every week on Wednesday from 6-8, but our winter break is coming up soon! Normally, we meet in the youth room to work on homework, play games, and find community. We will take our break from December 17th- January 7th and will be back to our usual fun on January 14th. Students who serve in the Music Ministry can attend their respective rehearsal times. We can't wait to hang out with you and the rest of our awesome students!

### **YOUTH GROUP**

Anderson First Students is meeting on December 14th for our Christmas Party and December 28th for youth group. AFS is for people in 6th-12th grade to find a place to learn, serve, and have fun together. We currently worship and serve together on Sundays at 10 and gather in the Youth room on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month from 11:15-1:15. During our time together, we play games and use Nua Origins curriculum to lead discussions about the bible and how it applies to our lives.

If you've got any questions about the Student Ministry, feel free to reach out to Ally Hall, our Director of Family Ministries. Also, make sure to follow us on social media so you don't miss any updates or events! Can't wait to see you all there!

### **AFS CHRISTMAS PARTY**

It's beginning to look a lot like..... Anderson First Students Christmas Party!

All of our Anderson First Student families are invited to attend the party. Every person attending should wear their best Ugly Sweater or favorite Christmas gear and bring a \$10 or under White Elephant gift for our gift swap. We will have lunch, games, and festive fun! See you December 14th from 11:15-1:15 in the Youth Room.



## Family Ministries

### FAMILY MINISTRIES WISHLIST

Spread a little Christmas cheer with our Family Ministry Wishlist!

Want to make a difference in our Family Ministry? Check out our new Amazon Wishlist! Just a few clicks can provide essential supplies to our kids., students, and young adults.

Every contribution, big or small, make a huge impact. Click on the link provided, order supplies, and bring them into Ally's office at Anderson First UMC. Thank you so much for your generosity and for supporting our Family Ministry!

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1DUMP4FBIZOSW?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1DUMP4FBIZOSW?ref_=wl_share)

### SNOWBALLS OF HOPE

Join us on January 4th for snowballs of Hope!

It's time to loosen up your throwing arm and donate new gloves, socks, and hats for adults and children in need this winter. Ball them up and "deliver" them to ally and Pastor corinne with your best shot during worship at 10 AM.

Donations benefit our community members in need. If you have additional questions, please reach out to Ally Hall.

### FIRST KIDS CLUB

At First Kids club, we meet in the Older Kids and Younger Kids classrooms every Wednesday evening to extend our Sunday lessons through engaging games, crafts, and discussion. Our winter break is coming up from December 17th until January 14th when we will be back in session. We look forward to welcoming you and your family on Wednesday night from 6 to 8 PM!

### KIDS CHOIR

On Sunday mornings from 9:25 -9:55, all kids aged 3 through 6th grade are welcome to join us in the Choir room for the first Kids Choir. Our next performance will be for Lessons and Carols on December 7th and Kids only performance on December 14th at 10 AM. Kids Choir will take its winter break and will not meet on December 21, December 28th, January 4th, and January 11th. Got questions? Don't hesitate to contact Sue Finger or Ally Hall.

### GINGERBREAD HOUSE COMPETITION

Mark your calendars for December 5th from 6:30 to 8 PM because it's time for our annual Gingerbread House Competition at Fellowship Hall! This event is perfect for all ages, so bring the whole crew! We'll have some basic supplies ready for you, but feel free to bring anything extra to make your gingerbread creation super festive.

There will be fun Christmas games, and you won't want to miss your shot at awesome prizes for the categories of Best Traditional, Most Creative, and Fan Favorite houses. It's a great chance to hang out with friends, family, and neighbors to spread holiday cheer!

If you want to reserve your FREE table (or two...or three!), use the link to register by November 23rd. We want to make sure we have enough materials for everyone to enjoy.

<https://forms.office.com/r/AV1binRs25?origin=IprLink>

Spread the word, start planning your gingerbread masterpiece, and get ready for a festive time! We can't wait to celebrate Christmas with you at this beloved Anderson First tradition!

### DEVOTION FOR DECEMBER

by Steve Anderson

*John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"*

Once again, the pace of Christmas shopping begins to quicken even though the ham and turkey are nowhere near the oven. Giving gifts to each other are symbols of the love and devotion we have for loved ones. Phrases such as "I have found just the right gift for them" echo throughout households. John 3:16 tells us that God gave us the ultimate gift, his Son. That Son became the role model for humanity. His teachings became guideposts for the development of love and fulfillment. These teachings are gifts that lead to the final gift of eternal life.

One of the greatest gifts anyone can give is to pay forward the gifts Jesus has given us by being a positive role model to others. It is very powerful and life changing to have someone believe in you. Jesus suffered greatly on the Cross which is evidence of the unconditional love He has for us.

Last December I mentioned a light at the end of a long dark tunnel. That light was Jesus. The light as He lived his life, became brighter and gave us the ability to overcome the imperfect dark spots of our lives. Some people see the light and shut it off. The question is why you would shut off a fulfilling life and the promise of spending eternal life with Jesus the ultimate role model.

## NEVER ATTENDED A BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE?

This information may help!

### WHAT IS BLUE CHRISTMAS?

A Blue Christmas service, also known as a Longest Night service, is a reflective, quiet worship service held around the winter solstice (longest night of the year) for those who find the Christmas season difficult due to grief, loneliness, or other hardships. It acknowledges sadness, loss, and pain, providing a compassionate space to mourn and find hope alongside the traditional Christmas celebrations.

### WHY WOULD I ATTEND?

To honor the loss of loved ones, job loss, divorce, illness, or other personal struggles. To find a space for grief and sadness when others are celebrating. To acknowledge feelings of loneliness or despair during the holidays.

### WHAT HAPPENS AT THIS SERVICE?

There is calm music – piano and violin, and soft lighting to encourage quiet reflection. Participants may light candles to symbolize grief, hope, or remembrance. Prayers are offered and scripture is used to bring comfort. Overall, the service helps people realize they are not alone in their struggle. You may not need this service but friend or family member may need you to bring them.

God is here to provide help and hope.

## TIME OF PREPARATION

As we prepare our homes, our church, our menus, our time, let us also prepare our hearts for the Birth and Re-birth of Christ in our lives. Below is a suggested reading for this time of Advent—this time of Preparation.



# Advent Reading

- Dec 1: John 1:1-8
  - Dec 2: Genesis 3:14-15
  - Dec 3: Isaiah 40:1-5
  - Dec 4: John 1:6-8
  - Dec 5: Luke 1:5-25
  - Dec 6: Luke 1:26-38
  - Dec 7: Luke 1:39-45
  - Dec 8: Luke 1:46-56
  - Dec 9: Luke 1:57-66
  - Dec 10: Luke 1:67-80
  - Dec 11: Isaiah 7:14;  
Micah 5:2-5a
  - Dec 12: Matthew 1:18-25
  - Dec 13: Luke 2:1-7
  - Dec 14: Isaiah 9:2-7
  - Dec 15: Luke 2:8-20
  - Dec 16: Luke 2:21-35
  - Dec 17: Luke 2:36-38
  - Dec 18: Matthew 2:1-12
  - Dec 19: Matthew 2:13-15
  - Dec 20: Jeremiah 31:15;  
Matthew 2:16-18
  - Dec 21: John 1:9-13
  - Dec 22: Luke 2:39-40
  - Dec 23: Hosea 11:1;  
Matthew 2:19-23
  - Dec 24: John 1:14-18
  - Dec 25: Philippians 2:5-11
- 