



The Chimes

December 2022
Volume 63, Issue 12

In the neighborhood for good!

A Witness to the Wonder

I clearly remember the primary manger scene in each house I lived in all of my childhood years. It was hard to forget. It was a glorious extravaganza. It covered the entire top of a long stereo cabinet in the living room. It began with the regular cast of characters — Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, shepherds, wise men, sheep, donkeys, a camel or two. As the years went by and my brother and I grew, so did the manger scene. The pieces no longer matched. There were many more than three wise men, a whole host of shepherds, an extra Mary and Joseph here and there and animals, lots and lots of animals. There were beautiful carved pieces and elegant porcelain ones, stuffed animals that towered over all the rest and angels — store bought and hand-made — suspended from the ceiling. It seemed to shout, "Rejoice!" when you looked at it. It was a beautiful vision of joy and welcome to all who might come to the manger.

Many, many years later, on a Christmas morning here at East Lake, I offered a gift to all who came of an extra character of the nativity, single pieces, slightly damaged pieces found at thrift stores and given by friends. I wrapped them all and invited members of the congregation to pick one, open it and tell what part their character played in the story and how that character was like them. I got a donkey. I'm sure I said something about the journey and carrying Christ into the world. The story that I remember was Clifford's. Clifford was a very special church member who was larger than life in body, intimidating even, but had the mind and heart of a child. Clifford picked his wrapped package and opened it to find a wise man. I don't remember what he said, if anything, in the service, but I will never forget what he said to me after, as we gathered for a simple meal for those who did not have family to be with. He came up to me, eyes shining and smiling bright as the sun and said, "I'm a wise man, ain't I, Miss Sally? I'm a wise man!" When we come to the manger, the place where Love came down to teach us and save us, we are all redeemed. We realize that we are all precious gifts of God, and we all have a place in the story of God.

In this Holy Season of Advent, may we come to know how important we all are in the Beloved Community of God. May we see the gift that we can be to one another, and may we know the love we are given to share. As a way of remembering these important truths, you are invited to bring a character, animal, shepherd, wise man, even Mary or Joseph (we will stick to just one Jesus figurine) to the altar anytime between now and Christmas and place it by the manger as a sign that you, we all, are welcome to the love of Jesus. We can all be a witness to the wonder.

Peace,

Sally

A Letter from Leslie

Hi, friends!

I hope all of you enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving. I know that I am certainly very thankful for all of you. Thank you for being so warm and welcoming to me and for inspiring me to be warm and welcoming to everyone else I come across, too. I am a better person because of this place!

Things have been coming along as usual this month. Looking at Sunday school plans for the new year, continuing our young adult outreach small group, preparing graphics and calendars for Advent, and so on. As always, the biggest thing I ask from you is to be praying for this church and this community! I am praying that this holiday season is one of growth all around and that many people who are in need of a church home may feel at home here.

As I'm sure you are aware, there is a lot of turnover going on in our denomination and in the universal Church, so it is a great time to reach out to people and invite them to join you at East Lake UMC, where everyone is loved and accepted. I am so glad to have found such an authentic and genuine place to worship and to serve. Let's spread the word!

With love,

Leslie

"At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart?"

Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God's own love and concern."

Mother Teresa



Have you ever been hungry?

Many times a day, people come by our office asking for a snack bag. Most of the time we don't know their story, and it's easy to make one up for them. He looks like he's healthy—why doesn't he get a job so he can afford food? Or, he comes everyday— isn't he just taking advantage?

But we are not called to judge—we are called to serve. And 99.9% of the time (at least), the people who come are in genuine need, whether we can see it or not. So next time you are at the grocery store, think about our snack bag ministry, and pick up one or more items:

Brown paper lunch bags

Vienna sausages

Granola bars

Bottled water

Non-refrigerated pudding or fruit cups

Thank you!

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December Birthdays

				1	2	3 *Carol Bullard
4	5	6	7	8	9 *Ava-Louise Hill	10
11	12	13 *Karen Brice	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 *Brandon Mason	23	24
25 *Jesus Christ, The Light of the World	30	31				



The first Bingo marathon is under our belts, having been on November 15, and we had great fun! Plus, we had three new players among us! All in all, it was a really good day.

BUT the fun doesn't end there. On Tuesday, December 13 (Karen Brice's birthday, by the way), we'll do it again—this time with some pretty cool non-Dollar-Tree prizes. The only catch is that all the prizes will be wrapped—so you won't know what you're winning *until the game is over!* That's right. You'll pick a wrapped prize, hold onto it until the whole game is over (that is, after the very last Bingo), and then everyone will open their prize(s) at once. *Then*, you may try to negotiate a trade with someone who has something you want more than the prize you picked out. Jane P. will guide you through the process. But we'll have a bounty of Christmas surprises!



**Christmas Potluck
& "Jingo" Party**
Friday night, December 16
6:00 p.m.
in the Diner
Bring a dish to share and a
wrapped prize* (\$10 limit)
Plus a "white elephant," also**
wrapped

*One per person

**This might be what you got last year if you couldn't use it! For more info, ask Jane P.

Did you miss Giving Tuesday?

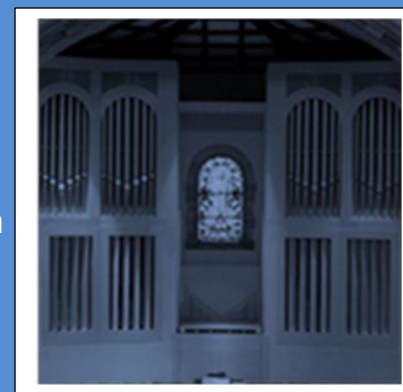
Did you miss out on an opportunity to practice generosity on Giving Tuesday yesterday? Do not fear! There are many ways for you to support ELUMC and our missions today and in the future! Throughout the past several weeks, we have been highlighting our various church funds as the subject of our [#WednesdayMorningPrayers](#) time. As this continues today, we invite you to consider giving prayers, time, effort, supplies, or a money donation to any of our funds that speak to your heart during this special time of year. Is it children? Missions? Our theater program? Or seniors?

This week for [#WednesdayMorningPrayers](#), we focused on praying for our Senior Adult ministries. This ministry is made possible by donations to our Senior Adult Fund. Join us in praying today for the caring, inspiring, and wonderful senior adults in our lives. May we discover new and life-giving ways to show love back to them.

If you have a special senior adult in mind who has impacted your life, you may find it exciting to give to this fund in their honor or memory. Feel free to mention their name in the PayPal note, on the check memo, or on the cash envelope.

Music Notes 'midst Organ-izing

As our fifteenth Sunday afternoon Nine Lessons and Carols approaches, here's a recap of the history I've shared previously, along with a connection to our own church's present day. It began in 1880, in Truro, England, where its Cathedral was very much under construction. The clergy wanted to make Christmas Eve special in that place, which was not particularly peaceful nor orderly that year! King's College, Cambridge, began the service at the close of one war (1918), and the BBC picked it up in the 1930s. Yet it's amidst a second war that the scriptures and carols made their mark. From spaces with no heat, with blackened out windows, their stained glass having long since been hidden, all of Britain and much of its empire heard the story harkening of peace to a war-torn world.



In 1937, two Birmingham-Southern professors began the service at McCoy Methodist. I first went to it in 1965, at age nine. Later on, I was the stage manager for Carol Service's last nine Christmases in that place. Though I can't speak very far into the recent past, I'm aware that Mimi Jackson continued the tradition in our own church for a number of years prior to my own arrival. And except for my first Christmas with you when I was just getting to know you, we've done it every year since, 2002 through 2006 on Sunday mornings, and afterwards on Sunday afternoons.

Please pass the word around. I've realized that letters are not as effective anymore, so check the church's Facebook page, and copy the information to your own page. I'll also be putting something on my personal page. I hope to see all of you on the 18th, at 2:30, when we'll get to have this wonderful time again.

Love,

Barry

“Keep on praying for the saints . . .”

Ephesians 6:18

Please pray for the members of our church family who need our prayers:

Alma & Jack Boggan

Nancy Anderson

Gary Sandridge

Mattie Lou Harrison

All in our church family who are missing a loved one this holiday season

Those whose lives are being torn by war, storms, and other disasters

Congratulations!

. . . to Stephanie Dandridge, whose daughter Diamond gave birth to Journey Olivia on November 28. This beautiful gift from God is welcomed by her parents, grandmother Stephanie, and great-grandmother Stella.

Advent Opportunities to Share

There are many ways to share during the holiday season, and we all know them well. One of the ways we might not think of immediately is sharing the beauty of the poinsettias that are placed in the sanctuary and chapel each year. But since the window for ordering them will be closed by the time you are reading this, we are offering another way.

If you would still like to contribute to the beauty of our sacred spaces, you might want to consider making a donation toward the beautiful greenery that will hang during Advent and Christmas. You can make it in honor or memory of someone, just like the poinsettias. Just designate your check “Greenery IMO (or IHO) _____,” made to the church. If you want to pay by PayPal, do the same in the Notes spot, along with your name, so we’ll know to credit you for the gift.

Order your
Christmas
sides

by December 15
for pick-up through the
21st!

Cornbread Dressing
Casseroles (side and main
dish available)

Mac & Cheese

Yeast Rolls

Pies & Pound Cakes!



WHY EVERGREENS?

The season of Advent marks the time of preparation and hope for the birth of Christ on Christmas Day, and the tradition of the Hanging of the Green occurs at the start of Advent.

The symbols used in the hanging of the green have a long history.

Evergreens have long been symbolic of life and growth, and early Christians decked their sanctuaries with the boughs of evergreen as a promise of new life and as a sign of the hope that followers of Christ will live forever.



We apologize, but the December menu was not available at press time for this *Chimes*. Here are the offerings for the first week:

Tuesday, December 6 – Taco Salad with corn chips

Wednesday, December 7 – Macaroni & cheese, cabbage, butter beans, cornbread

Thursday, December 8 – Baked or fried fish, coleslaw, baked beans

Copies of the complete menu will be available in the Diner and the office next week (week of December 6)

Food
for
Thought

“Look up, you whose gaze is fixed on this earth, who are spellbound by the little events and changes on the face of the earth. Look up to these words, you who have turned away from heaven disappointed. Look up, you whose eyes are heavy with tears and who are heavy and who are crying over the fact that the earth has gracelessly torn us away. Look up, you who, burdened with guilt, cannot lift your eyes. Look up, your redemption is drawing near. something different from what you see daily will happen. Just be aware, be watchful, wait just another short moment. Wait and something quite new will break over you: God will come.”

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *God Is In the Manger*

From your lay leader . . .

As I sit in my office on Saturday the 3rd finishing the December *Chimes* while others are finishing our hanging of the green, I once again feel struck with thankfulness for this church and its people! I had another subject ready if I had room to write this month, but it can wait til January (if I remember it by then, that is 😊). We’ve had people on ladders and bucket trucks, hanging lights, wreaths, and garlands. We’ve had people hanging banners from the balcony, and others making magnolia-leaf arrangements in the windows. All following choir practice this morning, and during the lovely luncheon sponsored by the Joy Class but including all our adult Sunday School classes. Oh, my. As I write about it, I am overcome with love and thankfulness for everyone who gave up most of their Saturday to serve their church, but more importantly, their God. May you also be overcome when you see and hear what these people have done!

Jane Phares

Lectionary Readings for December

I keep your word close, in my heart, so that I won't sin against you.
Psalm 119:11 (CEB)

Sunday, December 4 – Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalm 72: 1-7, 18-19

Romans 15:4-13

Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday, December 11 – Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10

Psalm 146:5-10, or Luke 1:46b-55

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-11

Sunday, December 18 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-16

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Romans 1:1-7

Matthew 1:18-25

Wednesday, December 21 – Longest Night/Blue Christmas

Psalm 22, 23

Isaiah 40

Luke 2:1-7

Saturday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalm 96

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-20

Sunday, December 25 – Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalm 98

Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12)

John 1:1-14

Saturday, December 31 – Watch Night

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

Psalm 8

Revelation 21:1-6a

Matthew 25:31-46

Have you returned your pledge card for 2023?
You can put it in the offering plate/basket, bring it to
the church office, or email it to
finance.eastlakeumc@gmail.com!

December 2022

Saturday, December 3

Choir rehearsal – 9:30-11:00 a.m. (Choir Room/Sanctuary)

Hanging of the Green – 10 a.m. (Sanctuary and Chapel)

Sunday, December 4

Traditional worship – 9 a.m. (Sanctuary)

Alternative worship – 11 a.m. (Chapel)

Tuesday, December 6

Downstairs Diner – open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Thrift store - open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Crochet group – 12 noon (Diner)

Wednesday, December 7

Adult Bible Study – 11 a.m. (by phone)

Downstairs Diner – open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Luke study – 6 p.m. (First floor meeting room)

Thursday, December 8

Downstairs Diner – open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Thrift store - open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Saturday, December 10

Choir rehearsal – 9:30-11:00 a.m. (Choir Room/Sanctuary)

Sunday, December 11

Traditional worship – 9 a.m. (Sanctuary)

Sunday School – 10 a.m. (various classrooms)

Alternative worship – 11 a.m. (Chapel)

Church and Community Christmas Party – 3-5 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13

Seniors Bingo and Christmas Party – 10 a.m. (Back room of Diner)

Downstairs Diner – open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Thrift store - open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Crochet group – 12 noon (Diner)

Wednesday, December 14

Adult Bible Study – 11 a.m. (by phone)

Downstairs Diner – open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Luke study – 6 p.m. (First floor meeting room)

Thursday, December 15

Downstairs Diner – open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Thrift store - open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Friday, December 16

Boomers Christmas and Bingo Potluck – 6 p.m. (Diner)

Saturday, December 17

Choir rehearsal – 9:30-11:00 a.m. (Choir Room/Sanctuary)

Sunday, December 18

Traditional worship – 9 a.m. (Sanctuary)

Sunday School – 10 a.m. (various classrooms)

Alternative worship – 11 a.m. (Chapel)

Lessons & Carols – 2:30 p.m. (Sanctuary)

Wednesday, December 21

Adult Bible Study – 11 a.m. (by phone)

Downstairs Diner – open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Luke study – 6 p.m. (First floor meeting room)

Longest Night (Blue Christmas) Service – 7 p.m. (Chapel)

Thursday, December 22

Downstairs Diner – open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Thrift store - open 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Saturday, December 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service – 5 p.m. (Sanctuary)

Sunday, December 25

Christmas Day Combined Worship Service – 10 a.m. (Sanctuary)

The Diner will be open as usual this week, on Tuesday through Thursday. Daytime Bible Study on Wednesday WILL meet; nighttime will not.

Sunday, December 31

Traditional worship – 9 a.m. (Sanctuary)

Sunday School – 10 a.m. (various classrooms)

Alternative worship – 11 a.m. (Chapel)