



1232 National Road
Wheeling, WV 26003
304-242-2455
christumcwheeling@gmail.com
December 2024, Issue 33I

IN-PERSON WORSHIP

8:30 a.m. in the Chapel
11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

ONLINE SERVICE

christwheeling.org

Watch live Sundays @ 11 a.m.
or watch recorded services
posted after 12 pm on Sundays

Staff

Rev. Jake Steele

Pastor

Diann Nickerson

Family Life Coordinator
Director of Campus Ministries

Bill Stephens

Choir Director

Stephanie Gates

Children's Choir Director

Judith Allison

Organist

Carla Barris

Office Manager

Chelsea Young

Communications

Jamie Lafferty

Nursery Attendant

Ron Miller

Custodian

The Spire

Neighboring

My wife's grandmother, Edith battled Alzheimer's throughout most of the time I had the pleasure of knowing her. As many know, the disease devastates one's cognition, but it also can tamper with temperament as well. I never found Edith to be irritable, though. She was always sweet, consistently smiled, and was never off-putting even though you had to introduce and reintroduce yourself to her. Indeed, there was much that Edith couldn't recall, but she was good to remember a small playlist of stories that she cycled on a mental loop and she was happy to share them with you for as long as you'd want to listen:

"My mother-in-law never accepted me..." and on she'd go with one story.
"I love to bake bread. It's the only thing I think I do well these days..." off she'd go with another.
"No, but I love kids. There's nothing I like more than to see a yard full of kids running around."
My sister, Louise would always say, 'Why do you let them do that? They'll tear up your lawn...'
You could almost mouth the words that would come next, kind of like a sing-along.

Edith went to glory years ago, but for some odd reason she came to mind as I mused about Advent and all it entails. I suppose it's because another one of her stories fell out of some far away compartment, rolled down the hall of mental files and slipped underneath my cerebral door. I remember her narration of one oft-told tale so well, her voice is almost audible in my ear:

"Nobody neighbors these days. There once was a time when everybody neighbored, but not anymore." It's true. Count the number of knocks you get on a monthly basis and I'll bet it's under 5. Once upon a time, the knock used to *excite* us; now it *scares* us. Why? Well, we don't really expect it these days. No one just drops in—not without a call or text beforehand. We've become averse to the visit, especially the unexpected kind. We've become *backyard* in our behaviors and yet as a people of faith, we follow a *front door* God who not only knocks, but specializes in the surprise visit.

All of Advent (from the Latin word, *adventus*, meaning "coming") is a set up for the unexpected. In fact, a cursory scan of the scriptures will show us that the entire birth narrative of Jesus is built on a series of knocks and the hands of those who either opened the door or didn't answer. Through it, we learn how much it matters that we're *open* and how much we miss when we're *closed*. As we enter Advent, understand this: We're called to be a *"come and see"* people, but that posture is difficult to assume with a *"do not disturb"* mentality.

Good ol' Edith told the same tales as if she were telling them for the first time. For all those of us foolish enough to assume we've got the knock on the Good News of Christmas, we might be better served to receive the same old stories, but with expectant ears...as if we're hearing them for the first time. Maybe we should dust off the door mat, flip on the porch light and leave room in our lives. When we're open to the visit, we won't be surprised by the knock. Perhaps we'll discover, in time, that the Good News neighbors more often than we think.

Let every heart prepare Him room...

In Christ,
Pastor Jake

Christmas Eve will be one to excite!

Come to Christ Church on the 24th and step onto the scene of Good News Group Home where you'll find a rag tag collection of kids and young adults who are left to celebrate Christmas alone. When the group home director floats the idea of a gift exchange, all signs are pointing up for the residents until the scene comes crashing down in a moment you won't want to miss.

"The Gift of Good News" is a one-act skit that promises to pack a powerful punch that drives home the real meaning of Christmas.

If you want to catch the drama, come to the 7pm service in the main sanctuary, where we'll hear the ringing of the bell choir and the melodies of the chancel choir. In a fun and casual way, you'll sing traditional carols in candlelight and receive the hope of Christ through this drama that will not disappoint!

If you're looking for something on the traditional side with liturgy, recitation, preaching that punctuates the gift of God with us, and carols sung in candlelight, then join us at 4pm in the chapel for a worship venue that'll look and feel altogether different.

Spread the word! Invited a friend or extended family member and join us at any one of these offerings as we celebrate the birth of Christ, our King!

Family Life News

Messy Church attendees learned about the ten lepers and being thankful during November's Messy Church. We shared a meal, participated in activities that supported the bible lesson, and heard a message from Pastor Jake.



We have some real gamers in our congregation! We had seventeen people come out to our Giving Thanks Game Day who enjoyed a lunch of soup and salad and then commenced to having fun. There were four groups: the kids played all kinds of children's games but really enjoyed the paper covered cardboard boxes; one group played a shopping game and it got kind of loud when purchases were made; one group rolled the dice and got a Yahtzee or two; and there was one very cerebral game of Upwords! We will have another game day during the winter months.



A Blue Christmas service is held to provide a safe space for people who are grieving or experiencing other difficult emotions during the holidays. Some reasons for having a Blue Christmas service include:

- **To honor those who are grieving**
Blue Christmas services are a way to honor those who have lost loved ones and are experiencing grief.
- **To create a space for difficult emotions**
The holidays can be a time when loss and pain are especially hard to feel. Blue Christmas services provide a space to hold these feelings.
- **To remember God's goodness**
Blue Christmas services are a time to gather in the midst of suffering and remember that God is good, strong, and near.
- **To find hope**
Blue Christmas services offer healing and hope for those who are dealing with difficult life situations.
- **To create a sense of community**
Blue Christmas services can help build a Christian community where people can feel comfortable sharing their feelings.

If this kind of service speaks to you, please join us on Saturday, December 21st, the longest night of the year, to observe our Blue Christmas.

Blue
CHRISTMAS
A service of remembrance, reflection,
and hope for hurting hearts.

Christ
United Methodist Church

Saturday, December 21st
6 pm in the Chapel

Invite a friend.

WL WEST LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

CAMPUS MINISTRY



We are so thankful for all God's blessings throughout the year but are keenly aware of them during the holidays! Here are a few pictures to share from our Thanksgiving Dinner, the Warwood UMC Thanksgiving basket food drive, along with Campus Ministry students that have consistently been involved with our studies and programs through the fall semester. Our gratitude board lists all kinds of ways our students are grateful this year including their friends, family, teachers, and Campus Ministry.



We lift up our senior, Veronica Huggins, who has been a constant in Campus Ministry these last few years. This semester she has faithfully committed to drive students from campus to the Hope United Methodist Church Food Pantry monthly. She enjoys helping the clients who visit the pantry and volunteers time and time again for all our programs. Veronica is from Parkersburg, WV and is a member of a United Methodist Church at home. She's majoring in Community Education and wants to pursue teaching English as a Second Language when she graduates. Veronica has straight As so she's a smart and caring servant of God! She's a blessing to have in our lives.



As the term winds down and exams begin in the next few weeks, we ask for continued prayers for all our students and staff on the Hilltop. May God continue to show up on the Hilltop for our students and staff.

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas Season.

In Christ,
Diann Nickerson
Director of Campus Ministry



December Birthdays & Anniversaries

Andy Jackson	Dec. 1
Joyce Murphy	Dec. 1
Cecil* Heyman, IV	Dec. 3
Joseph* Blalock	Dec. 4
Gloria Jean Taylor	Dec. 4
Diane Gibbons	Dec. 5
Philip Knierim	Dec. 6
Stephanie Taggart	Dec. 6
John Weeks	Dec. 7
Delaney* Coffield	Dec. 8
Madison Jebbia	Dec. 9
Julie Lindsay	Dec. 9
Deborah Micker	Dec. 9
J. Kevin McConnell	Dec. 10
DeAnna Taylor	Dec. 10
Jennifer Croft	Dec. 11
Danielle* Soard	Dec. 11
Roxie Derheimer	Dec. 12
Corey Kidd	Dec. 12
Mary DeMoss	Dec. 14
Kevin* Joseph	Dec. 14
Stefanie* Shoemaker	Dec. 14
Steve Kerr	Dec. 15
Timothy Knight	Dec. 15
Colleen Lee	Dec. 15
Wesley Nickell	Dec. 15
Adam* Reid	Dec. 16
Lisa Vannoy	Dec. 16
Patricia* Oliver	Dec. 17
Sarah Schneider	Dec. 20
Bud* Hall	Dec. 21
Erikka Storch	Dec. 21
Aaliyah* Bass	Dec. 22
Taylor* Straub	Dec. 22
Donald* Robinson	Dec. 23
Frances Smaltz	Dec. 24
Lisa Gill-McClements	Dec. 26
Craig Collins	Dec. 27
Madeline* Brown	Dec. 28
Benjamin* Coffield	Dec. 28
Jonathan* Queen	Dec. 29
Kristen Walton	Dec. 30
Alexandra* Knight	Dec. 31

Joyce & Larry Murphy
December 1

Diane & Daniel* Gibbons
December 4

Bob & Joan McClelland
December 12

Kara & Clint Amie
December 16

Lisa & Bob Conner
December 28

CARE FACILITIES

•**Good Shepherd**
Denny Hon 235
Jack Kerr 320
Mildred Posey

•**Peterson**
Jane Friebertshauser 520

Christian Sympathy

Our thoughts and prayers are with the following during their time of need:

- Family & friends of Deborah Kiester on her passing.
- Karen Bruhn on the death of her husband, Jim.
- Family & friends of Richard Stewart on his passing.
- The Taggart Family on the death of Greg's girlfriend, Danielle Smith.
- Bob Barker on the death of his father, Robert Barker.
- Lisa & Bob Connor and family on the death of her mother, Doris Kennen in June 2024.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please take a minute to review the list, and let the church office know if there are any names to be removed .

Kevin Collins; Evan Clatterbuck; Candice O'Connor; Paula Fowler-Riethmiller; David King; Andy Cunningham; Sarah; Family of Robert Blount, Jr.; Shirley Conaway; Gary Galbreath; Craig; Justin; Randy Jones; Clem & Nancy Schutler; Kim & Buddy Bowman; Roxie Derheimer; Charlie Palmer; Parker Fox; Kevin Barton; Frank Gilbert & Family; Richard Gilliam; Logan; Barbara Buchwach; Harry; James Gyer; Brittany Yoho; Bob & Debbie Becker; Lee; Suzanne; Ruth Wade; Jeff Winslow; Addison Stephans; John Lendon; Travis Ellis; Bill; Sony and Gary; Josh Chaplin; Melissa; Breanne; Sandy Thames; Leslie Heldreth; Glenn Balla; John Witzberger; Freda Blake, Sherry Curry; Barb Wotojwicz; Family of Anya Robertson; Joan McClelland; Joanne Taylor; Randy Austin & Family; Miller Family; Jason Broadwater; Betty Dent; Paul & Kim Weber; Carol Pattim; Pat Staton; Jim Bowman; Rosemary Leicet; Terry; Linda & Jack Kerr; Kenny Nickerson; Dawn Walker Schemp; Jessie; Cathy Pavlock; Zach Henry; Harold Tharp; Randy Straub; Scott Morris; Michael Selick; Sara Madison; Sherwood Dobbs; Lauren Robinson; Harriett McCardle; Ted Allen; Gary Haught; Betty Hissom; Jim Jones; Jenn; Gail; Jeff; Sara Staley; Cody McAvoy; Kristen Smith; Jonathan Chance; Elizabeth Carson; Connie Macek; Bill Harr; Mr. P.; Linda Moffit.

Children's Church Volunteers

"Hands Up, Hands On, Hands Out"
- A volunteer sheet is now posted in the Narthex for volunteers to sign up for leadership opportunities in working with the children during Children's Church. This is an excellent way for one to get to know the children of the church on a different level. The Education Committee looks forward to seeing servants who are interested in taking on one or two Sundays of the church calendar to participate. Questions can be addressed to Diann Nickerson. **P.S. Sometimes it helps to ask a friend to help you with this endeavor. Available Sundays are posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex.**

HOC Donations

For the month of December, we will be collecting Bisquick mix, pancake mix and canned fruit for the pantry at the HOC.

If you would like to donate but don't have time or can't get out to shop, Shelby can do the shopping for you. Please catch up with her during worship or contact her at 304-242-6127.

Thank you to everyone that donated for the months of September, October & November.

Volunteers Needed

Beginning December 3, I will be leading Bible study every other Tuesday at Welty. To provide residents with the opportunity to engage in weekly Bible Study, I would be delighted to co-teach with someone who could lead sessions on the alternating Tuesdays.

If someone you know is interested in sharing this meaningful role, I warmly welcome the chance to collaborate during my "off weeks."

-Karen Shaw

Thank You

We would like to thank everyone that donated shoeboxes for the Appalachian Christmas Project. We collected a total of 82 boxes to help those in need.

We would also like to thank everyone that donated gifts to Crittenton and the House of the Carpenter for Christmas. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Children's Christmas Presentation

The CUMC children's music director, Stephanie Gates, wants to see as many young people as possible practice during Children's Church in December for a presentation on Sunday, December 22, 2024, during the 11:00 Worship Service. Come and join the fun in delivering a special message to the congregation.

Winter Freeze Shelter

We are collecting the following for the Winter Freeze Shelter: cans of coffee, individually wrapped snacks (lunch cakes, small bags of chips, cereal bars, etc.), and boxes of cereal. Please drop your donations off at the church.

December 29 Coffee Hour

On Sunday, December 29, we are asking everyone to bring in their leftover cookies & goodies to share at coffee hour.

Sign up Sheets Available

Sign up sheets for liturgist and coffee hour are now available for 2025. Please sign up and help where you can.

The flower chart for 2025 is also posted if you would like to remember or honor a loved one.





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