

# METRO UMC MESSENGER



**DECEMBER 4, 2024**

## ABOUT US

### VISION STATEMENT

*Transforming the World  
through Jesus Christ*

### MISSION STATEMENT

*Passionate Christians Making  
Disciples of Jesus Christ*



# MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Beloved Congregation and Community Members,

As we start the month of December, it is important to remind ourselves of the true essence of this blessed season. While the world may focus on the exchange of material gifts, let us remember that December is not merely about the presents we receive, but about the presence of love, joy, and peace that we share with one another.

The Bible reminds us in Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This scripture calls us to emulate the generous spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave His life for us. Let us, therefore, look beyond the material and focus on the spiritual gifts we can offer – kindness, compassion, and support to those in need.

In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus teaches us, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." As we navigate through this season, let our hearts be filled with the treasures of heaven – love, faith, and hope.

Let us come together as a community to reflect on these teachings and to find ways to give selflessly, just as Christ gave to us. Your acts of kindness, whether through volunteering, offering a listening ear, or providing for those less fortunate, are the true gifts that embody the spirit of December.

May this season be a time of spiritual renewal and a deeper connection with our faith and each other.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Faye



# "THE TRUE SPIRIT OF DECEMBER: GIVING OVER RECEIVING"

As the festive season approaches, our minds often turn to the tradition of gift-giving. However, it is crucial to remember that the true spirit of December lies not in what we receive, but in what we give.

The act of giving, as highlighted in Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," emphasizes the joy and fulfillment that comes from selflessness. This scripture encourages us to focus on how we can impact others positively through our generosity and kindness.

In the hustle and bustle of holiday preparations, it is easy to get caught up in the material aspects. Yet, Matthew 6:19-21 reminds us to prioritize spiritual treasures over earthly ones: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

This December, let us challenge ourselves to give in ways that have lasting value. Consider volunteering your time at a local shelter, donating to those in need, or simply offering a kind word to someone who may be struggling. These acts of giving not only bless others but also enrich our own spiritual lives.

Furthermore, Proverbs 11:25 tells us, "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed." Giving replenishes our souls and fosters a sense of community and connectedness. It reminds us that we are all part of something greater and that our actions can have a profound impact.

As we celebrate this season, let our hearts be aligned with the true spirit of giving. Let us focus on how we can serve and uplift others, reflecting the love of Christ through our actions. By doing so, we not only honor the true meaning of December but also strengthen our faith and community bonds.



# FINDING COMFORT IN LOSS DURING THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY SEASON

The Christmas holiday season is often seen as a time of joy, celebration, and togetherness. However, for many, it can also be a poignant reminder of loved ones who are no longer with us. The memories of shared moments can bring both comfort and sorrow. It is essential to acknowledge these feelings and seek solace in the words of scripture, which offer hope and encouragement.

## Embracing Memories

Losing a loved one is never easy, and during the holiday season, their absence can feel even more profound. Embracing the memories of past celebrations can be a way to honor them and keep their spirit alive.

- Isaiah 41:10: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

This verse reminds us that even in our moments of grief, we are not alone. God's presence offers strength and support, helping us to navigate through our sorrow.

## Finding Hope in Scripture

Scriptures can provide a source of comfort, reminding us of the eternal connection with our loved ones and the hope of reunion.

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14: "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep."

This passage reassures us that death is not the end. Our loved ones are at peace, and we hold the hope of being reunited with them one day.

## Prayers for Strength and Peace

Prayer is a powerful way to seek peace and strength during times of loss. Here is a prayer to uplift and encourage those grieving during the Christmas season:

Heavenly Father, in this season of joy, we find ourselves missing our loved ones who have gone before us. We ask for Your comfort and peace to fill the void left in our hearts. Help us remember the love and joy they brought into our lives. May we find solace in Your promise of eternal life and be strengthened by Your enduring presence.

Amen.

## **Cherishing Community**

Surrounding oneself with friends and family can offer much-needed support. Sharing stories, laughter, and even tears can be healing.

Matthew 5:4: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." This beatitude assures us that God blesses those who mourn, providing comfort through His love and the love of those around us.

## **Creating New Traditions**

While honoring the past, it can also be helpful to create new traditions that celebrate the lives of those we miss.

While the Christmas holiday season can be challenging for those grieving the loss of a loved one, it can also be a time of healing and reflection. By embracing memories, seeking comfort in scripture, offering prayers, and cherishing community, we can find peace and hope. May the love and light of those we miss continue to shine in our hearts, guiding us through this season.



## **Tips for Coping with Grief During the Holiday Season**

Navigating grief during the holiday season can be especially difficult. Here are some specific ways to support yourself during this time:

**Feel Your Feelings** - Allow yourself to truly feel your emotions, whether that includes tears, laughter, anger, or joy. It's important not to suppress what you're experiencing. Letting yourself feel can lead to healing and understanding.

**Write Out Your Emotions** - Keep a journal where you can freely express your thoughts and emotions. Writing can be a therapeutic way to process grief and can help you articulate feelings that might otherwise remain unspoken.

**Don't Resist the Grief** - Accept that grief is a natural response to loss. Instead of resisting it, acknowledge its presence and allow it to flow through you. Understanding that it's okay to grieve can be a step toward healing.

**Show Yourself Compassion** - Treat yourself with kindness and patience. Understand that it's okay to have days when you feel overwhelmed. Self-compassion can be a powerful tool for navigating difficult emotions.

**Take Care of Your Body** - Pay attention to your physical well-being by maintaining a balanced diet, getting enough sleep, and engaging in regular physical activity. Physical health can directly impact your emotional state.

**Ask for Help and Support** - Reach out to friends, family, or professional counselors. Let them know how they can support you, whether it's through listening, spending time together, or offering practical assistance.

**Do Something to Help Someone Else** - Helping others can provide a sense of purpose and connection. Volunteer at a local charity or perform random acts of kindness; these actions can create positive feelings and honor your loved one's memory.

**Honor Them with a Simple Tradition** - Create a simple tradition that keeps their memory alive and brings comfort. This could be as simple as lighting a candle in their honor, making their favorite dish, or visiting a place they loved.

**Tell Others What You Need as Specifically as Possible** - Communicate your needs clearly to those around you. Whether it's needing space, wanting company, or requesting help with holiday tasks, being specific will help others provide the support you need.

**Limit Stressors** - Identify and minimize activities or interactions that cause additional stress during the holidays.

**Express Your Emotions Creatively** - Write, paint, or engage in other creative activities to process your feelings.

**Plan Ahead** - Prepare for potential triggers by having a plan in place for how to handle them.



**Be Patient with Yourself** - Understand that healing is a process and allow yourself the time and space needed to grieve.

Remember, everyone's journey through grief is unique. Don't allow anyone to dictate to you how and how long you should grieve. Choose what feels right for you and give yourself the grace to navigate this season at your own pace in a healthy and productive way.

# WAYS TO HONOR FAMILY MEMBERS DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Honoring those who are no longer with us during the Christmas season can bring comfort and keep cherished memories alive. Here are some thoughtful suggestions to honor their memory:

## 1. Memory Ornaments

Create or purchase ornaments that symbolize your loved one. These can hang on your tree each year, serving as a reminder of their presence in your life.

Examples:

- A glass ornament with their name and birthdate.
- A photo ornament featuring a cherished image.
- Handmade ornaments using materials they loved.

## 2. Memory Candle

Description: Light a special candle in memory of your loved one. This act can symbolize their light and spirit continuing to shine.

Examples:

- A candle with their favorite scent.
- A personalized candle holder with an engraved message.
- Set aside a specific time each evening to light the candle and reflect.

## 3. Story Sharing

Gather family and friends to share stories and fond memories of your loved one. This can be an informal gathering or part of a larger holiday celebration.

Examples:

- Host a 'memory night' where everyone shares their favorite stories.
- Create a memory jar where people write down memories to read aloud.
- Encourage children to draw pictures or write about their memories.
- 

## 4. Charitable Acts

Participate in charitable activities in your loved one's name, reflecting their passions and values.

Examples:

- Donate to a cause they cared about.
  - Volunteer at a local shelter or community center.
  - Organize a fundraiser or charity event in their honor.
- mantel or table.
- Include holiday decorations they loved.
  - Add personal touches like a small plant or figurine.



## 5. Favorite Recipe

Cook or bake your loved one's favorite dish as part of your holiday meal. This culinary tribute can evoke warm memories and foster a sense of closeness.

Examples:

- Prepare their favorite dessert and share stories about them while enjoying it.
- Include a special recipe card at the table with a note about its significance.
- Host a cooking day with family to prepare several of their favorite dishes.

## 6. Memory Display

Description: Create a display in your home dedicated to your loved one. This could be a small altar or a simple photo collection.

Examples:

- Arrange photos, letters, and mementos on a mantel or table.
- Include holiday decorations they loved.
- Add personal touches like a small plant or figurine.

## 7. Personalized Playlist

Compile a playlist of songs that remind you of your loved one. Play it during holiday gatherings to keep their spirit alive through music.

Examples:

- Include their favorite holiday songs.
- Add tunes that were significant to your relationship.
- Share the playlist with friends and family to enjoy together.

## 8. Memory Walk

Take a walk to a place that holds significance for you and your loved one. Use this time to reflect and remember.

Examples:

- Visit a favorite park or nature trail.
- Explore a neighborhood you both enjoyed.
- Take a family walk and share memories as you stroll.

These gestures can offer solace and ensure that the spirit of your loved one remains a cherished part of your holiday traditions.





# PRAYER REQUESTS

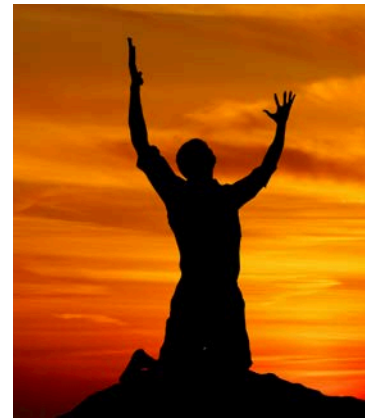
As we come together in faith and fellowship, let us remember the power of collective prayer. The Bible reminds us in James 5:16, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." With hearts full of love and compassion, we lift up the needs of our community, trusting in God's grace and mercy to bring healing, comfort, and strength.

In this spirit, we invite you to join our prayer list, a sacred space where we can lift each other up in times of need, gratitude, and celebration. Whether you are seeking healing, guidance, comfort, or simply wish to offer praise, your intentions are welcome here. Please take a moment to reflect upon the following prayer requests and join us in lifting these concerns to our Heavenly Father.

We would like to pray for:

Aaron Kane  
Vernon Myers  
Vivian Lewis  
Kleston Whitaker  
Thomas and Evelyn Dashiell  
Felicia & Wilbur Greenfield  
The Wood Family  
Greg & Vivian Claytor  
Alease Washington Stringer

Michelle Jordan  
Shannon Stewart  
Debra Newsome  
The Cooper Family  
Nellie Barbour  
Yvonne Hancock  
Laverne and Charles Foster  
Joseph ("Tick") Washington  
The Family of Kyle King



To add your name or prayer requests to the list or to include someone you know who could use our collective prayers, please reach out to us. Let us come together in faith, knowing that where two or three gather in His name, there He is with us (Matthew 18:20). May our prayers be a source of strength and solace, and may they bring us closer to the heart of God.

Prayer requests can be submitted through the church's website [metroumcindianhead.com/Prayer-Request](http://metroumcindianhead.com/Prayer-Request) or by clicking the QR code.



# CHURCH CALENDAR

## DECEMBER

- **Thursday, December 5** at 7:00 pm (*Via Zoom*) - Bible Study
- **Sunday, December 8 - NFL Team Spirit Sunday**
- **Sunday, December 8** at 10:00 am (*In Person*) - Youth Sunday School
- **Sunday, December 8** at 11:30 am (*In Person*) - Trustee Meeting
- **Sunday, December 10** at 7:00 pm (*Via Zoom*) - Finance Meeting
- **Thursday, December 12** at 7:00 pm (*Via Zoom*) - Bible Study
- **Thursday, December 19** at 7:00 pm (*Via Zoom*) - Bible Study
- **Sunday, December 22** at 11:30 am (*In Person*) - United Women in Faith
- **Wednesday, December 25 - MERRY CHRISTMAS**
- **Saturday, December 28** at 11:00 am (*In Person*) - United Methodist Men
- **Sunday, December 29** at 11:30 am - Pastor Faye's Farewell Fellowship

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



## **NFL TEAM SPIRIT SUNDAY** *SHOW US YOUR TEAM SPIRIT!*

Come dressed in your favorite team jersey or apparel the 2nd Sunday of each month.

Who do you think is going to Super Bowl LIX?  
Make your prediction on the signup sheet in the back of the Fellowship Hall, starting September 8.



INVITES YOU TO  
**BIBLE** STUDY

WITH PASTOR FAYE

THURSDAYS 7 PM  
VIA ZOOM

GENESIS to REVELATION

*A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse  
Exploration of the Bible*

\*To connect using your smart phone, tablet or computer (video & audio)\*

<https://zoom.us/j/97076134594> Meeting ID: **970 7613 4594**

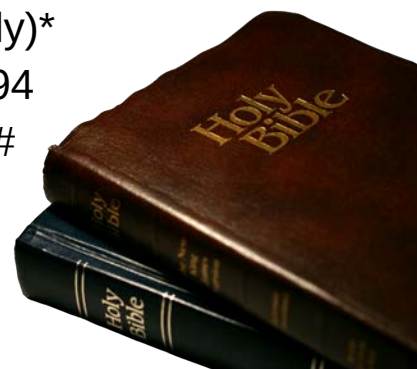
\*To connect using your telephone (audio only)\*

**(301) 715-8592** - Meeting ID: 970 7613 4594

When asked for the Participant ID, enter #

Then press # again to enter the meeting.

*To get details about how to get the book,  
call Metropolitan on (301) 375-9088*



*Advent*  
B I B L E S T U D Y

Awaiting the Already: An Advent  
Journey Through the Gospels

- **December 12 - Chapters 1 & 2**  
Mark: Slow Down, Pay Attention  
Matthew: The World As It Is
- **December 19 - Chapters 3 & 4**  
Luke: The Ultimate Advent Playlist  
John: The Light in the Darkness
- **December 25 - Christmas**  
*Study on your own*  
Titus: Paul's Christmas Letter



The study guide may be  
purchased on Amazon.  
Cost: \$8.00

# UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH'S Warmth Tree

## HOW TO HELP

- 1 Knit, crochet, or buy...
- 2 Hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, socks (unused or new)
- 3 Decorate the tree in the Fellowship Hall until December 18
- 4 Donations will be distributed locally

## Metropolitan UMC *Community Dinners*



**OPEN TO ANYONE  
WHO WANTS A MEAL**

Join us for our  
**Community Dinners**

EVERY WEDNESDAY  
from 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Free to the Community!

# GRAB AND GO!

*Bring a Friend!*

Sponsorship opportunities available.  
Please see Pastor Faye A. Johnson

# METROPOLITAN UMC FOOD PANTRY GIVEAWAY



Wednesdays 4:00 - 4:30 pm  
Saturdays 10:00 - 11:00 am

**OPEN TO THE  
COMMUNITY**

3385 Metropolitan Church Road, Indian Head, MD

## Dust Off Your Metro UMC Church Bank



Don't have one? See Sis. Diane Butler  
**SAVE YOUR LOOSE CHANGE FOR METROPOLITAN**

Get a bank. Fill it up. Bring it back to church.  
Get it back...and REPEAT

## WEEKEND BACKPACK FOOD PROGRAM

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

STARTING IN OCTOBER

**VOLUNTEER POSITIONS:**

**STOCKERS**

**PACKERS**

**DRIVERS**

For more information, contact  
Sis. Sheila Myers on (301) 326-0369 or see Sis. Nickki Harris



## Ways to Give



### BY MAIL

Send your checks or money orders to Metropolitan UMC  
3385 Metropolitan Church Road  
Indian Head, Maryland 20640  
**PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH**



### ONLINE

Give online using our Church Center App



Select Metropolitan United Methodist Church

Offering envelopes are available at Metropolitan.  
If you would like the offering to be applied to a specific ministry or program, please make note of that on the envelope or check.



### IN PERSON

Give in person on Sundays or drop contributions off in black box at Metropolitan Church  
Sun: 9-11 am;  
Mon-Wed: 9 am - 12 pm  
Sat: 9 am - 11 am

# SERVICE **TIMES**

## **WORSHIP SERVICE**

Sundays at 10:00 am

Join us for In-Person or Virtual Worship Services

### **Join us on Zoom**

Connect using your smartphone, table or computer (video and audio)

Meeting ID: 961 1274 4083

### **Connect using your telephone (audio only)**

Dial: (646) 558-8656

Meeting ID: 961 1274 4083

When prompted for the Participant ID, enter #

Then press # again to enter meeting

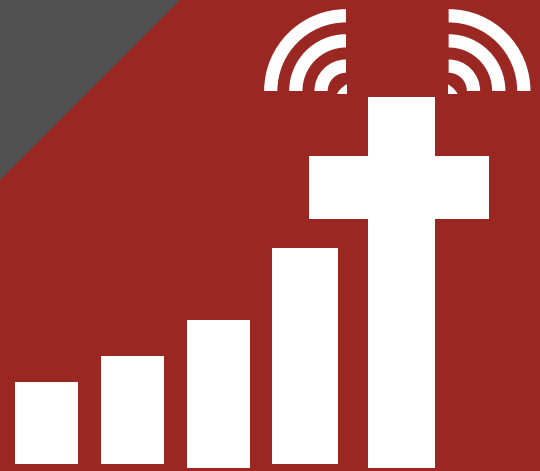
### **Join us on Facebook**

### **Visit our YouTube Channel**

## **BIBLE STUDY**

Thursdays at 7:00 pm

# GET **STAY** CONNECTED



## **CONTACT US:**



(301) 375-9088



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