

THE NEWNAN FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SHEPHERD

DECEMBER 2023

Friends and Family of Newnan FUMC,

I recently reread Langston Hughes' short story "One Christmas Eve," which tells of a 1933 Christmas in which segregation is still a reality and a little boy named Joe who is not allowed to see Santa because of the color of his skin. He tries to get close and when Santa sees him, he is rude and mean to Joe. When Joe later reunites with his mother, he tells her about his brief encounter with Santa, and his mother replies, "That wasn't Santa. If it had been, he wouldn't have treated you that way."

Hughes' story has haunted me since and has caused me to reflect on the idea that Christians have been called to embody someone far greater than Santa, and yet we fall short. We have been called to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world, and still, I wonder how many have encountered me, and had a conversation afterward that went something like, "No, that wasn't a Christian. If it had been, he wouldn't have treated you that way." Indeed, Langston Hughes' tale serves as a stark reminder that our actions and interactions with others reflect upon our faith and our calling to embody Christ's love.

Thankfully, the Christian calendar gives us an opportunity every year to start over, to approach the birth and life of Jesus anew, and to recommit ourselves to following Jesus. Every year, we are given the opportunity to enter into Advent once more, to imagine first-century Bethlehem, a couple on their way, pregnant with a child. We are allowed moments to picture the story once again in Luke, where there is no room in the inn. And we are asked to reflect on the simple question (among many others) – Would we make room for Jesus if we had the chance? Or would we simply declare, "No room!" shut our doors, covered with greenery and Christmas spirit, and leave a family in the cold, alone and wondering if the people on the other side of that door really knew what Christmas was all about?

This Advent and Christmas season, I pray that we might repent of our own shortcomings and recommit ourselves to embodying the true spirit of Christmas – a spirit of love, compassion, and open doors. May we strive to be the hands and feet of Christ, creating a more just and loving world for all. And may any we encounter leave our presence thinking to themselves, "I think that person knows what Christmas is all about."

God bless you all and be sure to pray for and welcome our new members: Barbara and Mike Merget, and newly baptized member Maren Moore.

*In His Grace and Love,
Andrew Chappell*

Andrew Chappell | Senior Pastor
achappell@newnanfumc.org
770.253.7400 (x202)



Connor Bell | Associate Pastor
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NEWNAN FIRST UMC MISSIONS

NEWNANFUMC.ORG/MISSIONS

On Wednesday, November 15th, we had the opportunity to look back and celebrate the ways that this church has served during the past year. I am so proud of this congregation, and we have a lot to celebrate. In 2023, we gave over \$80,000 to local and international mission partners, with an emphasis on giving toward local Newnan non-profits like Bridging the Gap. Through donations brought each Mission Sunday, we have donated dozens of grocery carts worth of dry food goods to One Roof to be given to the hungry in our community. And at Annual Conference this past June, our church was recognized in front of every United Methodist Church in the North Georgia Conference as we received the Church of Excellence in Outreach Award, given for meeting the highest standards of United Methodist Missions in the Conference.



There is much left to be done for the kingdom of God, and I am excited that the work will continue. We welcome our new Missions Chair, Peter Sheren. Peter and his wife Ivonne joined our church last year, and are long-time Methodists with a heart for service. The Sherens went on our church's mission trip to Guatemala, and their heart for showing others the love of God through both word and deed was on full display. We are excited to welcome Peter into this role!

He has big shoes to fill. **As we welcome Peter as our Missions Chair, we give thanks for the 5 years of incredible leadership of Greg Oothoudt.** Greg has served at our church as missions chair since 2019, and has led the church in our efforts to be the hands and feet of Christ. Through staff changes, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the 2021 EF-4 tornado, Greg has pushed this church to take seriously the call to love our neighbors not just with our words, but with our actions. We are so grateful for Greg's leadership and give thanks that he will still be a part of our church body (while catching a breather). If you have the chance, you can send a kind note to Greg for his service to the church, and we will make sure it is delivered to him.

If you aren't currently serving, please be in prayer for how God is calling you to do so. Consider buying a foster child a Christmas gift through the Joy Tree, serving as a driver or administrator for the NEST (Newnan Emergency Shelter Team) with our church on Saturday nights/Sunday mornings, or in a multitude of other ways. Please let Aileen Burnett, our Missions Coordinator, at aburnett@newnanfumc.org or contact Connor Bell at cbell@newnanfumc.org to find out how you can serve in our church and community.

In Christ,

-Pastor Connor Bell



Greg Oothoudt



Peter & Yvonne Sheren

NEWNAN FIRST UMC MISSIONS

NEWNANFUMC.ORG/MISSIONS

NEST VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

The Newnan Emergency Shelter Team (NEST) is a local partnership of churches that provide a warm shelter for our neighbors who are homeless. On nights when the temperature drops below 35°F, the NEST mobilizes to ensure that those without a home have a place to go where they are fed dinner, can sleep at night in a warm safe space, and eat breakfast in the morning.



Our church has committed to helping out on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings. This involves picking up a meal and picking up folks on Saturday night in the church bus, dropping them off at a hotel that night, and then picking them up with breakfast on Sunday morning around 10AM (you can still make it to worship at 11!). If you are interested in helping to serve, you can sign up by emailing Missions@newnanfumc.org or contact Pastor Connor at cbell@newnanfumc.org.



THE JOY TREE



Each year, NFUMC collects a list of names of foster children in the community, detailing a Christmas list of toys and clothing needs. These needs are placed on tags, and members of our congregation are invited to shop for these items as a way to help provide a blessing for these children during the Christmas season. Tags can be taken from the tree in the Narthex of the sanctuary.

Drop-off for items will be on the 3rd floor of the Annex Hall on:

Sunday, December 3rd, 9:30-12:30pm

Friday, December 8th, 4:00-6:00pm

Saturday, December 9th, 10:00-12:00pm

Sunday, December 10th, 9:30-12:30pm



Thank you to everyone who donated coats, hats, scarves, gloves, and food to One Roof. Your monthly donations assist so many in our community. We will take the month of December off and will continue our collection on January 21, 2024. Be on the lookout for that month's donations.

Thank you to Mary Jane Ginn for delivering our monthly donations.

NEWNAN FIRST UMC MUSIC MINISTRY

Caitlyn Dixon, Minister of Music | cdixon@newnanfumc.org | 770.253.7400 x205



Hello all!

We've made it to the season of Advent - a time when we celebrate the hope, peace, love, and joy surrounding the birth of Jesus. For me, the music of this season is some of my favorite in the church year. It is always so hard to program for these four weeks - so many great Christmas hymns, so little time! As you've likely seen from the church calendar, this season is overflowing with great opportunities for worship. We hope you'll all attend the Children's Pageant on December 3rd during the Sunday school hour. What says Christmas more than those sweet babies telling the story of Christ's birth?!

The following Sunday, December 10th, I hope you'll join us at either 3:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. (or both!) for O Holy Night. I know that this night of music-making is a major tradition for the church, and I cannot wait to experience it for the first time! I know all of the groups have been preparing Christmas music for some time, and they look forward to sharing that with all of you. Finally, on Sunday, December 17th, we will be hosting a Service of Lessons and Carols. This service, imitating the tradition set forth in 1918 at King's College Cambridge, features nine lessons that lead to the birth of Jesus and the Great Commission we have to preach the good news. The Chancel Choir, Inspirations, and a guest chamber orchestra will be presenting music that we hope will help prepare your heart to experience the magic and love that surrounds the Christmas season.

I am feeling so blessed this year, particularly through one piece of music. "See, Amid the Winter's Snow," a choral anthem by Dan Forest, is one of my favorite pieces of music to share in the church at this time of year. I've gotten to sing this piece on two occasions, but this is the first time I've ever had the joy of preparing it with a choir and orchestra. From the opening wind chimes, the piece takes the listener on a journey. It is as if you can hear those wind chimes and the choir calling you from over the hills to celebrate that Christ is born. It is my hope that this piece, and the others, will stir in you the same emotions they stir in me, rekindling the spirit needed to go back out in the world and make disciples for Jesus Christ.

I hope that, no matter how much chaos and noise the world around you makes in this season, you take the time to be still and reflect on the blessings you've experienced this year. I hope that you take the time to pray about how you can share those blessings with others. I hope you feel those blessings so deeply in your heart, and that the music we experience together in this season reminds you of the hope, peace, love, and joy we have to share with the world.

Soli Deo Gloria and Merry Christmas!
Much love,
Caitie



FIRST KIDS! 5TH GRADE AND UNDER

NEWNANFUMC.ORG/firstkids

Andrea Stuart, Director of Children's Ministries | astuart@newnanfumc.org | 770.253.7400 (x209)



December is truly a special month and will be celebrated as such! We have had such a wonderful year learning, growing, and celebrating Jesus. This month we get to celebrate the birth of our savior. In December in Sunday School, we will be discussing Jesus's birth, Mary and Joseph, and all the wonderful things that happened surrounding His birth! For 4-year-olds to 5th grade, we are meeting on the Childrens Floor. Infant to 4 years old has Sunday School in the Preschool, located below the Parish Hall. Sunday School is 9:45 - 10:45 am every Sunday.

Children's Worship is for 4-year-olds through 2nd grade. We wiggle and worship, while we learn and grow closer to God! Children's Worship is dismissed from the Sanctuary at the 11am service and takes place on the Children's Floor upstairs.

ROOT345 is for all 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders. It is a Sunday evening program that encourages the development of faith and fosters relationships with God through daily living! There are games, projects, activities, and a lot of FUN! We eat at 6pm, the program is from 6:30 to 7:45pm. ROOT345 meets on the Children's Floor.

Upcoming dates!

December 1: 4:30-6:00pm Christmas Pageant Practice

December 3: 10:00am - Christmas Pageant in the Sanctuary

December 3: 11:00am - Happy Birthday Jesus Party all children and families welcome

December 3: 6:00- 7:45pm - ROOT345 Christmas Party. It will be our last gathering until January

NEWNAN FUMC UTH | GRADES 6 -12

NEWNANFUMC.ORG/UTH

Paul Mosley, Director of Youth Ministries | pmosley@newnanfumc.org | 770.253.7400 (x219)



We want to start by saying thank you to everyone involved in UTH.

From students to volunteers to parents, you have helped make this year at UTH one of the best yet. We accomplished so much this year and are so excited for this advent season alongside all of you. We are closing out the Fall semester at UTH with a wonderful

Christmas party, planned and organized by your very own student leadership team, on December 3 from 6-8pm It is a celebration of these students and the awesome year we have had; we will be decorating cookies, watching some Christmas classics, Christmas Games, and of course, karaoke. Guys should bring a salty snack to share, and girls something sweet. We hope you will join us for our festive celebration!

Upcoming Events:

- December 3: UTH Christmas Party

- December 10: O Holy Night

- December 17: Deadline for Ski Trip Signups www.newnanfumc.org/uth

Fall Retreat was an adventure. We took an awesome group of students up to Camp Glisson in Dahlonega where we unplugged from the chaos that is life and instead connected with God and each other. During our worship sessions, we dove into the parables and all they can teach us about Jesus and our walk with him. When we were not in worship, we ziplined, roasted marshmallows, played tons of games, and just enjoyed the wondrous creation of God around us!



LOOKING FOR CONNECTING OPPORTUNITIES?

MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

December 5 & 19 | 8:30AM IN THE GATHERING ROOM

Join us twice a month for breakfast and a variety of programming.



PARENT'S DAY OUT!



Saturday, December 16, 2023 from 9:00am to 1:00pm

The kids will play, fellowship, and have the option of enjoying a family friendly movie, while you enjoy an evening out on the town! Space is limited to 20 children and payment is non-refundable. Children will be checked in through KidCheck upon arrival that evening.

Email Danika Ford for more info at nursery@newnanfumc.org



MARTHA CIRCLE | Monday, December 18 | 9:45am | Gathering Room

All are welcome, our current study is Pew Sisters. ! If you are interested contact Beverly Watkins at bevwatkins40@charter.net or call the office for more detail.

FUN N' FROLIC

newnanfumc.org/signups

Aileen Burnett, Missions & Senior Adult Coordinator | aburnett@newnanfumc.org | 770.253.7400 (x206)



ELVIS THE MUSICAL

ELVIS, THE MUSICAL

Elvis @ The Legacy

Sunday, January 28, 2024 from 1:00pm to 5:30pm

Come enjoy an afternoon at The Legacy Theater to see Elvis, the musical. This official Elvis Presley bio-musical takes a closer look at the rock star and cultural icon whose impact shaped the history of music and culture. This new musical explores the pivotal moments in Elvis's life through the perspectives of those who knew him best. ELVIS spans from his impoverished childhood in Tupelo, Mississippi to his triumphant 1968 "Comeback Special," and his ascent to be "The King." We will leave the church at 1pm and plan to return around 5:30pm. Cost of the tickets are \$36.00. Payment must be made when reserving your ticket. For more information, please contact Aileen Burnett, Missions and Senior Adult Coordinator, at 770-253-7400 x 206 or aburnett@newnanfumc.org. RSVP by January 11, 2024. newnanfumc.org/signups

On November 9th, we traveled to the Atlanta Expo Center to view the Tut Exhibition. This was a wonderful day spent learning and connecting with our friends. On the way back to Newnan, we enjoyed lunch at a restaurant in Tucker.

On November 12th, we went to see White Christmas at the Legacy Theater in Tyrone. We enjoyed an afternoon of fellowship and preparing ourselves for the upcoming holiday season.

The 2024 Senior Adult activity schedule will be sent out during December via email. If you have any ideas for trips, please contact Aileen Burnett at 770-253-7400 x 206 or aburnett@newnanfumc.org.

Beginning January 1, 2024, any Senior Adult activities will need to be paid for at the time of registration. Until payment is received, you will be placed on an interest list. Payments must be given to Aileen. If you have any questions, please contact Aileen or Pastor Connor.

NEWNAN FUMC PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

NFUMCPRESCHOOL.ORG



Nancy Martin, Preschool Director | nmartin@newnanfumc.org | 770.253.7400 (x212)



The 4yr and Kindergarten classes celebrated Thanksgiving with a program called The Thanksgiving Celebration. The children had a great time performing for their parents.

On December 1, the Kindergarten class is performing Christmas songs at Barnes and Noble to support the Carnegie Foundation Book Fair. We will celebrate Jesus's birthday on our last day of school before Christmas break by having a birthday party for Jesus.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas.
Blessings!
Nancy Martin & Susan Mitchell



IN THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH

Loving one another through life's ups and downs



Maren Emily Moore



BAPTISMS

Maren Emily Moore | November 26, 2023



NEW MEMBERS

Mike and Barbara Merget | November 5, 2023



Mike and Barbara Merget



MEMORIAM Christian sympathy is extended to the family of the following member of Newnan First United Methodist church.

Claudia Jean Nash

December 12, 1943 - November 4, 2023

newnanfumc.org/calendar

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2

8:00am Youth Choir Fruit Day

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

8:30am Worship (S)
 9:45am Sunday School
 9:45am Children's Christmas Pageant (S)
 11:00am Worship (S)
 11:00am Happy Birthday, Jesus! Party
 4:30pm UTH Ensemble (CR)
 5:00pm UTH Choir (CR)
 6:00pm FirstKIDS ROOT345 Christmas Party
 6:00pm UTH Group Dinner Christmas Party

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4

4:30pm Joybells
 5:45pm Inspirations
 7:00pm Council Meeting (AH)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5

8:30am Men's Prayer Breakfast (GR)
 9:30am Celebration Singers @ Wesley Woods
 6:00pm Trustees Meeting (AH)
 6:15pm Masterworks Chorale (CR)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

7:00am UTH Biscuits & Bibles @ Chick-fil-A
 9:00am Preschool Polar Express (UL)
 4:30pm Bellissimo Handbell Choir (BR)
 4:45pm Cherub Choir (CH)
 5:15pm Carol Choir (CR)
 6:45pm Chancel Choir (CR)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7

11:30pm Friendship SS Christmas Party (AH)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

4:00pm Fear This For Life class (CH)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 | O HOLY NIGHT

8:30am Worship (S)
 9:45am Sunday School
 11:00am Worship (S)
 3:00pm O Holy Night (S)
 6:00pm O Holy Night (S)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

4:30pm Joybells
 5:45pm Inspirations

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

9:30am Celebration Singers (CR)
 2:30pm Parkinson's Support Group (rm. 201)
 6:15pm Masterworks Chorale (CR)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

7:00am UTH Biscuits & Bibles @ Chick-fil-A
 6:45pm Chancel Choir (CR)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

FNF Masterworks Christmas Concert

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

9:00am Parent's Day Out
 10:00am Choir Rehearsal for Lessons & Carols

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 | LESSONS AND CAROLS

8:30am Worship (S)
 9:45am Sunday School
 11:00am Worship (S)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18

9:45am Martha Circle Small Group (rm. 200)
 6:00pm Finance Committee Meeting (AH)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

8:30am Men's Prayer Breakfast (GR)
 NO Masterworks Chorale (CR)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

10:00am Dementia Support Group (AC)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 | Christmas Eve

11:00am Christmas Eve Worship (S)
 4:00pm Christmas Eve Worship (S)
 11:00pm Christmas Eve Worship (S)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25 | CHRISTMAS EVE

Office Closed

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

Office Closed

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

6:45pm Chancel Choir (CR)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

Choirs Sing @ The Biltmore

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 | NEW YEAR'S EVE

10:00am Worship (S)

CALENDAR ABBREVIATIONS:

S: Sanctuary | PH: Parish Hall | PS: Preschool (lower level of PH) | CR: Choir Room | YL: Youth Lounge | A###: Annex Building
 AC: Annex Conference Room (1st floor) | A3F: Annex 3rd Floor | AH: Annex Hall | AP: Annex Parking Lot | BR: Bell Room | CH: Chapel
 1## or 2##: Main Building (1st or 2nd floors) | OL: Online | GR: Gathering Room | OS: Offsite

Charitable Contributions and Year End: What It Means for You and the Church.

Checks that are written, mailed, and postmarked in 2023 will be deductible in 2023 though they are not received by the church until the first week of 2024. The deadline for contributions received in the mail postmarked by December 31, 2023, is January 5, 2024. Any contributions received after this date will be applied to 2024.

Year-end contribution statements will be mailed and postmarked no later than January 31, 2024.

If you are donating stock, please allow at least three weeks for the funds to be transferred to the church by December 31st or you may miss all the above deadlines! If the deadlines are missed, your stock contribution will be applied to 2024.

Owen Lambert, Finance & Business Director | olambert@newnanfumc.org | 770.253.7400 (x207)

STAY CONNECTED WITH NEWNAN FIRST UMC!

Stay in touch with all the latest news and activities through our weekly emails, sent out each Tuesday.

Subscribe with this QR code or going online to newnanfumc.org/signups.org

Need help subscribing? Email Shelley Casey at media@newnanfumc.org



WEEKLY EMAILS



YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCES

Week 46

Total Tithes/Income: \$ **1,099,263**

Total Expenses: \$ **1,288,877**

Over/(Under): \$ **((189,615))**

TOTAL BUDGET: \$ **1,616,113**