

# THE ST. JOHN'S POST

~ JANUARY 2025 EDITION ~

## 2025 CHURCH COUNCIL

**RW Edmondson—Church Council Chair**

**Justin Isenhour—Church Council VP**

**Lise Turner—Lay Leader**

**Jason Creel—Church Treasurer**

**Tevis Vandergriff—Recording Secretary**

### Lay Members to the Annual Conference

**Barbara Gaither**

**Judy Tilly**

**Nancy Rivers**

**Les & Susan Spencer**

**Phyllis Helms (alternate)**

**Brenda Stowe (alternate)**

**Steve & Minda Siebert (alternates)**

**Wayne Bouldin—SPRC Chair**

**David Harroff—Finance Committee Chair**

**Amy Bartholomew—Missions Comm. Chair**

**Charlene Williams—Care Ministry Chair**

**Jemma Hardinger—Networking Chair**

**Nancy Rivers—Education Committee Chair**

**Les Spencer—Trustee Chair**

**Nancy Stark—Worship Committee Chair**

**David Armstrong—Disaster Response Coord.**

**Joan Pate & Barri Helms—Connections Team Co-Chairs**

**Judy Tilly & Ruth Orwig—Stewardship Comm. Co-Chairs**

**Ashley Helms—Children's Council Chair**

**Suzanne Fisher—Youth Council Chair**

**Steve Siebert—UMM President**

**Brenda Stowe—UWF President**

**Katherine Burns—Epworth Rep.**

**Tevis Vandergriff—Scout Coordinator**

### At Large Church Council

**Lauren Meador**

**Bri Natoli**

**Lou & Margie Singer**

**Robyn Grant**

**Lori Vidonic**

**Adriane Starnes**

**Avis Wilson**

**Suzanne Fisher**

**Beverly Anderson**

**Patrick Edmondson**

**Emily Lee**

**Mandy Shamblin**

### Children & Youth Director

**Mallory Capps**

### Music Director

**Dr. Jonathan Hall**

### WEE School Director

**Beth Meador**

## **2025 CHURCH COUNCIL CONTINUED.....**

### **Lay Leadership:**

**Lise Turner-Lay Leader**

**Judy Tilly-Annual Conference Delegate**

**Courtney Bonéy, Joy Honeycutt, Steve Siebert, Brenda Stowe, Martha Sides, Tevis Vandergriff, Elaine Cryderman, Sarah Robertson, David Helms and Rev. Karen H. Radcliffe**

### **Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC):**

**Wayne Bouldin-Chair of Committee**

**Lise Turner-Lay Leader**

**Barbara Gaither-Annual Conference Delegate**

**David Cameron, Brent Meche, Martha Sides, Karen Rowe, Beth Hozey, Charlene Williams, Beverly Anderson and Jan Patterson**

### **Finance Committee:**

**David Harroff-Chair of Committee**

**Rev. Karen H. Radcliffe**

**Lise Turner, RW Edmondson, Wayne Bouldin, Jason Creel, Phyllis Helms, Les Spencer, Judy Tilly, Minda Siebert-Finance Coordinator, Beth Meador, Terry Helms-Facility Manager and Russ Williamson-Bank Contact**



### **At Large Members to Finance:**

**Bryan Meador, Amber Boan, Jemma Hardinger and Avis Wilson**

### **Trustees:**

**Les Spencer-Trustee Chair**

**Kirk Hardymon, Gilbert Anderson, Bill Hozey, Zeke Patterson, Nancy Rivers, Kristi Vandergriff, Jon Turner and Scott Gainey**

# Welcome to 2025

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It's amazing to think about how much the world has changed in the past twenty-five years. The approach to the year 2000 and all the chaos of the Y2K bug, which once seemed like a looming disaster, turned out to be just a brief blip in history. Now, as we enter the next year, we're reminded of how technology has transformed our lives, from how we communicate to how we shop, learn, and worship. We've witnessed major shifts in every aspect of our day-to-day routines, with New Year's resolutions often reflecting this desire for change and self-improvement.



As the new year approaches, many people will once again turn to popular resolutions like exercising, losing weight, getting organized, and reducing debt. It's a familiar cycle: the surge of motivation to make a positive change in the new year, with ads and promotions encouraging us to buy products or join memberships to help achieve these goals. But what's often forgotten in all of this is that the most sustainable goals are those that come from within and from the support of a community.

One great opportunity that has stood out is the Exercise with Avis program at St. John's. For the past two years, Avis Wilson has been offering a chance to get fit, stay healthy, and build community every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 11:00 AM in the Fellowship Hall. There are no membership contracts or fees—just a group of people coming together to support each other in living healthier lives. The benefits of this program go far beyond just physical fitness; they extend to building connections and encouraging one another to stay on track.

As we age, staying active becomes even more crucial. The risk of falls increases as our muscles weaken and our balance diminishes, but regular exercise can help prevent this and promote overall well-being. This is a fantastic opportunity to get a head start on your New Year's resolutions and improve your physical health in a supportive and welcoming environment.

So, as we reflect on the changes over the past twenty-five years, let's also look forward to the new possibilities in the year ahead. Let's help spread the word about Exercise with Avis and make 2025 a year of growth in body, mind, and soul!

See you at St. John's where God continually transforms us into better servants.

Shalom,

Karen



# THIS MONTH AT ST. JOHN'S

## **Monthly Meeting:**

**Book Club:** January 6 @ 7pm (MBC)

**January Grief Group:** January 15 & January 29 @ 4:30pm (MBC)

**Clara Phillips Circle:** January 13 @ 5pm (FC)

**Morning Glory Circle:** January 14 @ 10:30am (MBC)

**Missions Committee:** January 26 @ 12:15pm (Loft)

**Finance Committee:** January 26 @ 12:15pm (MBC)

## **Events in January:**

**Exercise with Avis:** Monday-Wednesday-Friday @ 11am (FC)

**Dreaming & Planning Workshop:** January 4 (8:30am-1pm)-FC

**UWF Winter Luncheon:** January 12 @ 12:15pm (FC)

**Community Meal & Worship:** Wednesday Nights @ 5:45pm

## **Lunch Buddies:**

Lunch Buddies will meet on **Tuesday, January 21 @ 11:30am** to enjoy great food and fellowship at **Luigi & Sons in Rock Hill**. The address is 2387 Cherry Road. Register on REALM or in the Communication Center by Sunday, January 19th! All are WELCOME!

# January 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Happy New Year!  CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED!	2	3	4 <a href="#">2025 Dreaming and Planning Workshop-FC</a> 8:30am-1pm
5 <a href="#">Communion</a> REAL Kids Ice Skating @ 12pm  No UMYF	6 Book Club 7pm-MBC	7 Handbells 6:30pm  Scouts-FC 7pm	8 5:15pm Music Makers 5:45pm-Dinner 6:30pm-Worship 6:30pm-REAL Kids (MBC) 6:30pm Cub Scouts Den Mtgs	9	10	11
12 <a href="#">UWF Winter Luncheon @ 12:15pm-FC</a>  UMYF @ 4pm in the Zone	13 CP Circle 5pm-FC	14 MG Circle 10:30am-MBC  Handbells 6:30pm  Scouts-FC 7pm	15 5:15pm Music Makers 5:45pm-Dinner 6:30pm-Worship 6:30pm-REAL Kids (MBC) 6:30pm Cub Scouts Den Mtgs	16	17 <a href="#">UMYF Friday Night Hang</a> 7pm-9pm	18
19  UMYF @ 4pm in the Zone	20	21 Lunch Buddies 11:30am-Luigi & Sons  Handbells 6:30pm  Scouts-FC 7pm	22 5:15pm Music Makers 5:45pm-Dinner 6:30pm-Worship 6:30pm-REAL Kids (MBC) 6:30pm Pack 130 Mtg.-Sanctuary	23	24	25
26 Missions Mtg 12:15pm-Loft Finance Mtg. 12:15pm-MBC  UMYF @ 4pm in the Zone	27	28 Handbells 6:30pm  Scouts-FC 7pm	29 5:15pm Music Makers 5:45pm-Dinner 6:30pm-Worship 6:30pm-REAL Kids (MBC)	30	31	

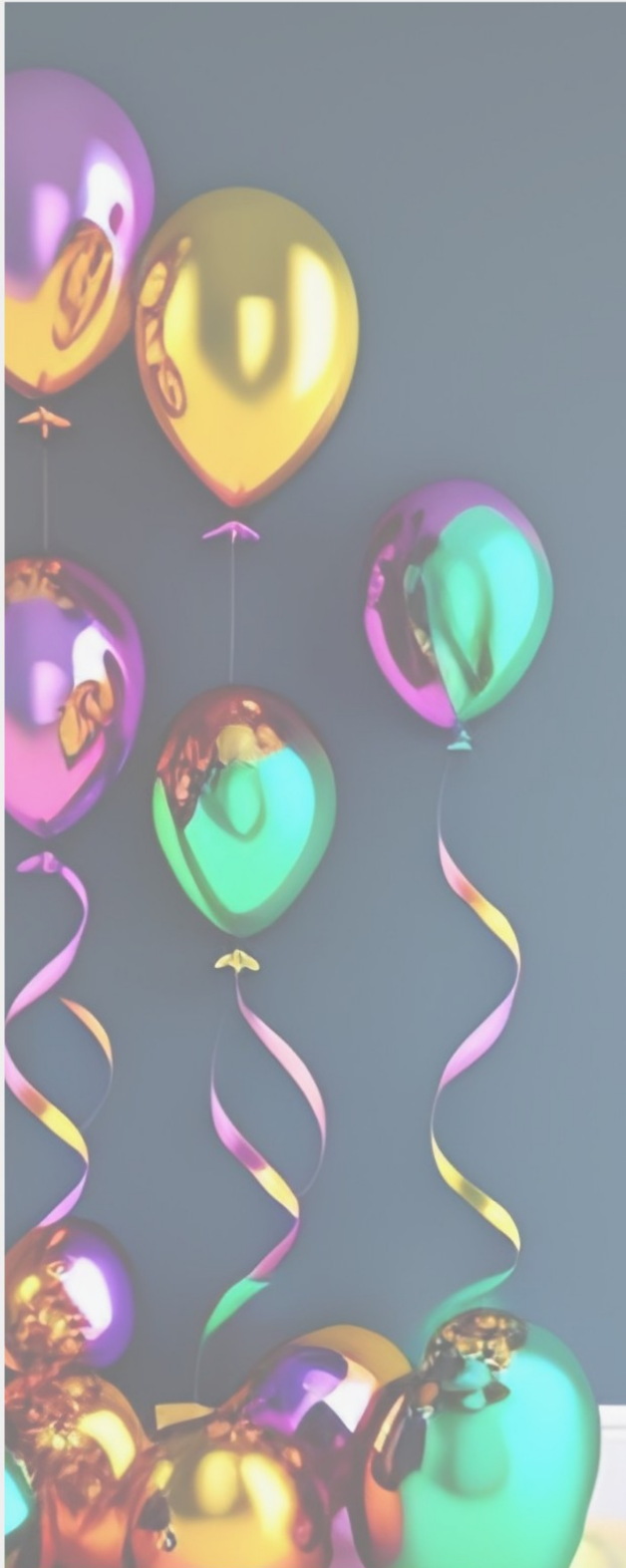
Every Sunday (Unless Otherwise Noted):

8:30am & 11:00am: Worship Service  
9:45am: Hospitality  
10:00am: Sunday School  
2:00pm: Choir Practice

Every Monday-Wednesday-Friday:

Exercise with Avis (11am-11:30am)-FC  
(Changes to schedule will be given in previous class)  
[GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP:](#)  
January 15 & January 29 @ 4:30pm (MBC)

## LET'S CELEBRATE!



### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

January 1	Cindy Lobo
January 2	Charlie Elliott
January 4	John Edward Frick Davis Lee Barbara Newton
January 6	John Lee, III Ron Masters Drew Fey Marina Nielsen
January 8	Lou Singer
January 9	Pam Huckabee Dr. Bill Mayes
January 10	Jon Turner Audrey Johnson Shelley Pruitt
January 12	Anissa Beth Miller
January 14	Lauren Meador Brent Meche
January 15	Scott Conant
January 16	Lauren Johnson
January 17	Christopher Dowdy Owen Fey Rachel McConaghy
January 18	Gina Hill
January 19	Sidney Hillhouse Bonnie Meche
January 22	TJ Fuller Larry Taulbert
January 23	Brad McDonald Wes Moore
January 24	Zeke Patterson
January 26	Crissy Anderson Jason Damm
January 26	Abigail Edmondson Benjamin Edmondson Ford Bond Wells Johnson
January 28	Les Spencer
January 30	Catherine Kinley Sarah Kinley
January 31	Courtney Bonéy Ed Carswell Lori Clyburn Nelson Odom
January 10	Bill & Beth Hozey
January 17	Rick & Becky Diak
January 24	Jason & Glory Creel



# Community Meal & Worship

Wednesday Evenings @ 5:45pm (Dinner) & 6:30pm (Worship)

REAL Kids: Join Ms. Mallory in the Men's Bible Classroom  
beginning @ 6:30pm

## JANUARY 8:

Hamburgers  
Tater Tots  
Cole Slaw  
Brownies

\*Registration deadline is Jan. 5th

## JANUARY 15:

Chicken Alfredo  
Salad  
Garlic Bread  
Italian Desserts

\*Registration deadline is Jan. 12th

## JANUARY 22:

Pancakes  
Bacon  
Sausage  
Fresh Fruit

\*Registration deadline is Jan. 19th

## JANUARY 29:

Meatloaf  
Mashed Potatoes  
Green Beans  
Dessert

\*Registration deadline is Jan. 26th

\*Registration is available on REALM the Thursday prior to the meal or in the Communication Center on Sunday morning prior to the meal. For questions, contact the church office.

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Meal Costs: Adults (age 13 & older are \$8 each)  
Age 12 and under are FREE  
Family Maximum is \$20

# 2025 DREAMING & PLANNING

## JANUARY 4, 2025

*8:30am-1pm*

JOIN US AS WE DREAM & PLAN  
FOR THE PROGRAMS & MINISTRIES HERE  
AT ST. JOHN'S IN THE COMING YEAR!

**We will gather for coffee at 8:30 & begin  
planning at 9am. Lunch will be provided.  
Please sign up! All are invited!**

THEN, AFTER DOING ALL THOSE THINGS, I WILL POUR  
OUT MY SPIRIT UPON ALL PEOPLE. YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS  
WILL PROPHECY. YOUR OLD MEN WILL DREAM DREAMS,  
AND YOUR YOUNG MEN WILL SEE VISIONS.

**JOEL 2:28**



## JANUARY 2025

Are you looking for a New Year's Resolution for 2025 that, if kept, will help you follow the teachings of Jesus and enrich your life and the life of others around you?

You claim the answer to this question every Sunday morning during worship. Practicing this answer changes lives. And, when it is preached, the Holy Spirit encourages the hearer to practice it. I offer you two true examples.

1. A father disowned a daughter because she married outside her race. Unaware of this, his pastor was led to preach on \_\_\_\_\_. The father, whose heart was moved by the Holy Spirit, realized his wrong and reconciled with the daughter. The father died a few years later. The daughter called the pastor and in tears thanked that pastor for his part in bringing them together.
2. A young woman was living estranged from her sister-in-law. She heard a sermon on \_\_\_\_\_. The Holy Spirit moved her heart. She went home, walked across the street and threw her arms around the neck of her sister-in-law and asked for \_\_\_\_\_. Now you know the answer to my question. What is it?

**We often recite the Lord's Prayer by rote without hearing what we are praying. May we each resolve to practice what we pray every Sunday in 2025 and always. (Ephesians 4:32, Mark 11:25)**

**Preachers faithfully preach knowing "God's Word will not return void."**



# Memorials/Honorariums

## IN MEMORY OF:

Cameron Ward

Joe R. Griffin

by

Julie Sweatt

Peggy Powers

by

Alice L. McCall

Gene & Brenda Ervin

Nelson & Judy Odom

The Billy Powers Family

Faye Hill

by

Gene & Brenda Ervin

Gloria Pittman

Nelson & Judy Odom

James H. Carlisle

Nancy Baude

Dale Bessent

by

Karen Vinson

Janet Tracey

by

Curtis Mann, Jr.

Gene & Brenda Ervin

Nelson & Judy Odom

In Memory of Don Welchel by Nelson & Judy Odom

In Memory of Richard Ervin, Essie S. Ervin, James Ervin, Tootsie Ervin Massey, Ellen Ervin Hughes, Albert Ervin, Jerry Conrad, Marvin Howie, Willie A. Howie, Jo Howie Ellis and Jamie Dyer

by

Gene & Brenda Ervin

SPECIAL DONATION TO THE DEBI EDMONDSON SCHOLARSHIP FUND BY GENE & BRENDA ERVIN, JEAN M. HUMMER, LES & SUSAN SPENCER AND HEATHER TAYLOR

## IN HONOR OF:

Joyce Patterson, Barbara Gaither, Joyce Kimbrell, Barbara Newton, Kristen Spinks and Amy Bartholomew by St. John's Ladies' Bible Class

## IN HONOR OF:

Karen Rowe, Brenda Little, Peggy Bishop, Kristen Spinks, Amy Bartholomew, George Rhinehardt, Benny Patterson and Gene Ervin by St. John's Men's Bible Class

## IN HONOR OF:

Matteo Natoli by Les & Susan Spencer

## IN HONOR OF:

RW Edmondson by The New Wesley Fellowship Class

## Christian Sympathy:

We extend our Christian Sympathy to the family of Andy Burkholder who passed away on December 8, 2024

ALL LADIES

ALL LADIES

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

# WINTER LUNCHEON

*Lunch - Fellowship - Games*

JANUARY 12TH, 2025

START AT 12:15 PM

Sign up on Realm or in the Communication Center



SPONSORED BY UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

# WEE School News

Beth Meador, Director

## W.E.E. School Registration 2025-2026

W.E.E. School registration for the 2025-2026 school year begins Monday, January 27th at 9:00am for currently enrolled students and their families as well as church members.

Registration will open to the public on Monday, February 3rd.

For more information please contact

Beth Meador at (803)548-6557 or [sjumcweeschool@gmail.com](mailto:sjumcweeschool@gmail.com)

## W.E.E. School Spirit/Fundraising

Please join us at Toppers Pizza in Fort Mill, Doby's Bridge Road on Tuesday, January 21st from 4:00-9:00pm. Please mention WEE School when placing your order. Thanks for supporting our WEE School

The W.E.E. School receives a portion of your purchases as a rebate from Harris Teeter. Please help us out by linking your card to our school. Our Harris Teeter number is 6893. Visit [W.E.E. School Spirit/Fundraising](#) to link your card today. Thank you!!

HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR



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# UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

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## Unit officers for United Women in Faith were elected to serve

### St. John's UMC:

President – Brenda Stowe,  
2 years 2025-2026;

Vice-President - Nancy Rivers,  
1 extended year term, 2025;

Secretary – Joyce Kimbrell,  
2 years 2025-2026;

Treasurer – Elaine Cryderman,  
1 extended year term, 2025;

Nomination Committee Chairman –  
Martha Sides, 2 years 2025-2026.

**These extended terms were initiated  
to alter the elections of officers  
and prevent all officers  
changing at one time.**

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Brenda Whitesides Stowe

My name is Brenda Whitesides Stowe, and I have been elected to serve as Unit President of UWF for a 2-year term of 2025 and 2026. I am 84 years old, widowed since 2012, live at 101 W. Lockman Street, Fort Mill, and am a very happy person. I have 3 children, Chris Robbins, Barrie Edwards and Patrick Patterson who spent their childhoods at St. John's UMC, and a stepdaughter, Cindy Stowe Walters. I have 21 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandson. In my spare time, when not addressing birthday cards, I love gardening, host a dinner group at my house most Monday evenings (I do not cook, my sweet neighbor, Catherine, has a mission to serve we elderly by cooking for us) but we eat at my house.

I am happy because Jesus is my savior, and I am still able to be helpful to others. I have prayed much about this decision to be considered as a President of this wonderful group. My first hope for our unit of UWF is that our present members all get to know each other better by activities we do together and together we learn of God's plan for our organization and how we can help. My second hope is that more women of St. John's will want to be part of our organization in some way. We are willing to discover the "HOW" we can include more women at St. John's with God's help.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Nancy Rivers

My name is Nancy Rivers, and I have been elected to serve one more year as UWF Unit Vice-President. I was born in Gassaway, WV and am a lifelong Methodist, and PK. I grew up in various towns in NC, WV and FL and finally landed in Fort Mill. I have 2 daughters (both married), three grandsons and three grand-puppies.

I serve St. John's as the Handbell Director, a choir member, Education Team Chair, Secretary of the Trustees, a delegate to annual conference, and a substitute Sunday School teacher. I serve the Rock Hill District as a member of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. I am the Membership, Nurture, and Outreach chair for Rock Hill District UWF.

One of my favorite scriptures is 1 Corinthians 16:14(KJV) "Let all that you do be done in Love."

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Joyce Kimbrell

My name is Joyce Kimbrell, and I serve as Secretary for our United Women in Faith Unit. James and I have 2 children and 5 grandchildren. I was first introduced to the Methodist Church by Miss Martha Hatchett, a second-grade teacher in Fort Mill. On Wednesday nights, Miss Hatchett would pick up 3 friends for prayer meeting. Ms. Sally Wilkerson, Ms. Janie Blackwelder, and Ms. Viola Blackwelder. Before arriving at SJUMC, the laughter in the car was contagious. Reverend Drennan was pastor, and Ms. Myrtle Thackston played the piano for the service.

During that time period, the Methodist Women would hold a yearly Fall Bazaar to raise money for missions. All church ladies were involved with making crafts, selling flavoring, making baked goods, taking cake orders for upcoming holidays. I got to see interesting women from all backgrounds and occupations working together in the church, serving....and having a good time.

Participating in the Morning Glory Circle has allowed me to get to know members from a personal standpoint, rather than just knowing a name and face. Working together on projects is fun. Please consider joining a circle and sharing your talents as the tradition of service continues at St. John's. You are needed.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Elaine Cryderman

My name is Elaine Cryderman, and I was re-elected to serve as Unit Treasurer of UWF for one more year. I grew up in Western Kansas, Dodge City, a small town where there were few trees, and you could see the vast sky. I still marvel at the lush vegetation South Carolina has. I am a widow and live in my big old house with two cats. I still garden, do my own yard work, cook my own meals, and read lots of books. I am so fortunate to have my daughter, Katherine Burns, and her daughter, Piper, live near me.

As I get older, I find that I do not participate in as many social groups as I used to, but I am very active and love St. John's and all the friends I have here. Your church friends, are the ones who take me to doctor's appointments when I have eye surgery; we eat out together probably more often than we ought; and I enjoy attending Circle, Sunday School and Worship regularly. I still help with Altar Guild, and I enjoy Avis's Exercise Class. God has been good to me. I am indeed blessed.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Martha Sides

My name is Martha Sides, and I have been elected to serve as Nomination Committee Chairman for the Unit of St. John's UMC for a two-year term.

I was married for 52 years until my husband passed away 3 years ago. We enjoyed raising our 4 children and delighted in our 9 grandchildren.

I have been a member of St. John's UMC for 40 years, taught the kindergarten class in Sunday school for 5 years, helped start our Children's Church program and was coordinator for 6 years.

After my husband's passing, I truly realized the value of my church family. Psalm 100 is a scripture that inspires me to serve the Lord.



***Respectfully submitted,  
Brenda Stowe, President UWF Unit***

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January 2025

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# Children and Youth News

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Children and Youth Director: Mallory Capps- [stjohnsumc.youthandchildren@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnsumc.youthandchildren@gmail.com)- (843)-504-5419

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Happy New Year!!! I hope you all have a wonderful 2025! We have so many fun things happening this month! UMYF will start back on January 5th and REAL Kids starts back up on January 8th. Thank you for all your support for the luminaries and poinsettias this year! We look forward to all the fun and growth of the 2025 year!



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## UPCOMING EVENTS COME JOIN US!

REAL Kids will be starting back on January 8th during the Community Meal and Worship time at 6:30pm. This is open for all children 3 years old- 5th grade!

UMYF will start back on January 6th at 4:00pm and will be every Sunday afternoon of January.

January 5th the children will be going ice skating directly following the 11am service. If you are interested in joining us, please let Mallory know!

“Road Trip” Vacation Bible School will be June 16-20, 2025! Please plan to join us for a fun filled week as we learn about being on the Go with God! Registration will open in April! More information to come!

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# Missions Committee News!

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*Happy New Year!*

**I'm excited about working with all of you in my new role as Missions Chairman.**

**With Shawne's guidance, we will continue working with our current Missions projects while looking to our community for more opportunities to serve.**

**In talking with different groups in our community, they mention the idea of feast or famine. They often receive visits and contributions around the Christmas holidays but see much less the rest of the year. We need ideas about addressing this issue.**

**Please join us on January 26th for our first meeting of the year. Everyone is welcome! We will meet after the 11:00 am service in the Men's Bible Class.**

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**Submitted by Amy Bartholomew, Missions Chair**





## Music Department News!

Thank you to members of our adult choir, handbell ensembles, and children's choir for presenting special music to celebrate advent and Christmas.

January is a good time to consider joining one of our music ensembles.

Handbell ensembles rehearse on Tuesday evenings, children's choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings, and the adult choir rehearses Sunday afternoons.

If you would like to be a part of our ensembles, please contact me @ [jonathanrhall@gmail.com](mailto:jonathanrhall@gmail.com).

Happy New Year!

submitted by Dr. Jonathan Hall, Music Director



# NOTES FROM YOUR EDUCATION TEAM

Can you believe it is 2025?

We are starting a new year and many are thinking about making New Year's Resolutions. Personally, I steer clear of resolutions. That way I can't break one! Instead, I set goals for myself.

A life-long goal of mine is TO LEARN! I love learning about almost anything, but especially about God. Won't you join me in a learning journey to strengthen your relationship with God?

## Avenues of learning more about God:

- Sunday School
- Worship
- Bible Study
- Wednesday Fellowship
- Lay Servant Ministry Classes
- Etc.

If you want to know more,  
just ask me.

submitted by Nancy Rivers  
Committee Chair



# STEWARDSHIP NEWS!

## WHAT I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT STEWARDSHIP THE LAST TWO YEARS

### *1. Stewardship, Generosity, and Giving are not synonymous!*

Most people think, when they hear the word Stewardship, strictly in terms of a church wanting your money. The terms Stewardship, Generosity, and Giving are often used interchangeably and they confuse people. Stewardship is simply the act of being a steward. In biblical times a steward was a respected person of high integrity entrusted with his master's possessions. He was expected to manage the possessions following the master's wishes. Since God created the world and every thing in it (even us and the talents he gave us) then stewardship is recognizing that God is the owner and we are his managers. As managers and believers, we are responsible for using God's possessions to please and worship Him – not to use “our” possessions to get rewards in heaven. The first step in becoming a good steward is recognizing and accepting that God owns and has given us all that we have.

Generosity stems from the Lord loving a generous giver. What would it look like to have a congregation of joyful, generous gospel stewards? Stewardship is also what we do with what God has entrusted to us. Vibrant Christian stewardship includes what we do on God's behalf in our relationships; giving of time, skills, abilities, and passions, and management and sharing or giving of possessions; and current and planned.

### *2. Stewardship is more about spiritual growth than Dollars and Cents or giving of time, talent, and treasure.*

It is estimated that 25 – 50% of church attendees give nothing or next to nothing. The lack of giving is not a financial problem but a spiritual one. God is a giver. Our willingness to give reveals our relationship to God. Ask God via prayer to guide you and provide for your needs so you can give what he wants you to – to help others. So, as you pray and talk with him daily, you will find that you grow in your faith. In other words, the quality of your spiritual life grows. Your faith is stronger, you worry less, you are more joyful because your giving and sharing of your time, talents, and resources is an act of worship and thankfulness.

*3. True stewardship is about hearts and not just giving of our time, talents, and treasure.*

As with most things, stewardship is a heart matter. Such faithful stewardship grows not from membership or rules, numbers or percentages, but from a grateful response to God's initial outpouring of love and covenant faithfulness to us. Remember He tells us that the greatest commandment of all is to love. If we model this commandment in our lives, then we end up living out of God's abundance instead of sinking into scarcity thinking. We nurture generous living in ourselves and others, encouraging one another to trust God's empowering work among us.

Stewardship is our response to who God is, who we are in Christ, and what He commands us to do. Giving generously causes us to reprioritize our lives, seeking to offer to God the first and the best of all that God has given us and managing all the rest according to God's generosity. When we're unclear about what this means, the best place to start is Scripture. Jesus talks about money a lot throughout the New Testament

(more than he says on both heaven and hell!). When it comes to giving here's what He said on the attitude and approach we should have. 2 Corinthians 9:7 says "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver". As Christians, when we don't demonstrate good stewardship in our own lives, it can undermine our credibility with those we are trying to reach with the good news. We should also, from our hearts, share why we give and how it's blessed us and brought us joy!

As we understand true biblical stewardship, it brings us these changes in our lives:

- We begin to build a legacy of stewardship in our families.*
- We treat our spouses and kids differently.*
- We approach our work with a new sense of purpose.*
- We become grateful for everything we have.*
- We live within our means.*
- We draw closer to the Lord in our daily walk.*
- We have hope for the future.*

Hallelujah!

Respectfully submitted  
by Martha Jones

## Jeremy Sets His Sights Higher!

Eighteen-year-old Jeremy last saw his mother when he was 3 years old. Throughout most of life, his father was away, serving time in prison. So, Jeremy was raised in part by his strict, loving grandparents. Unfortunately, by the time he reached high school, his grandfather had passed away and his grandmother had developed dementia. Subsequent living arrangements with various relatives and acquaintances failed to work out. Entering his teen years, his grades plummeted, and he ran away several times. He spent time in an alternative school. His guardian eventually sent him to live at Epworth.

Quiet and reserved by nature, Jeremy arrived at Epworth unsure of himself and shaken by the chaos he had experienced. He missed his friends, felt self-conscious about his appearance, and was nervous about attending a new school. “I didn’t want to come to Epworth at first,” he said. “But it was OK once I started making friends.

Looking back, I feel like God was just lining things up for me.” Epworth’s Faith Formation Director Jennifer Stanley remembers Jeremy’s first day at Epworth. “I remember he quietly told me he liked basketball,” she said.

“Now, he plays in a community basketball league, and you can find him showing his younger peers how to do a layup and cheering them on from the sidelines. Watching him come out of his shell was inspiring.”

At Epworth, Jeremy’s grades soared; his senior year, he made all A’s, even while working a part-time job at a local grocery store. “Jeremy came to me several times to talk about his options for higher education,” said Christy Mooneyhan, academic director of Epworth’s Barnes Learning Center. “We discussed finances and long-term goals and how each option fit into what he ultimately wanted to do in life. I was always amazed at his maturity in looking at the big picture and how his choices now would impact him later in life. He was very engaged in looking for scholarship opportunities as he knew he had few resources for paying for his education. His initiative was a true testament to the maturity he has gained since arriving at Epworth.”

Jeremy graduated from high school in May. The University of South Carolina offered him a place in its freshman class of 2024, and he has been awarded \$3,500 in private scholarships. He recently moved from Epworth's residential campus to the Independent Living Center where he can live at no charge while he completes college. He is searching for a paid internship, ideally with a law firm. He dreams of becoming an attorney. "I want to use my life to help people," Jeremy said. "I want to take the hard situations people find themselves in and make it better for them. Also, lawyers make a decent living, which is important to me because when I have a family, I'm going to make sure it's a stable home... like Ms. Deanna's family."



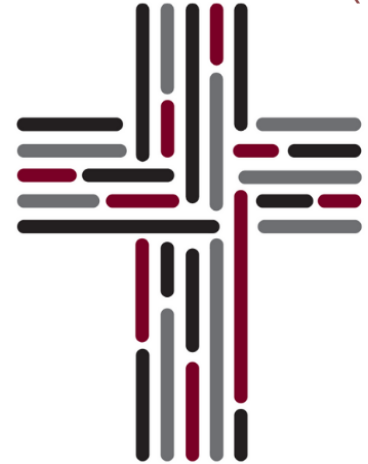
Deanna was one of Jeremy's house parents at Epworth. She introduced him to her mom, dad and siblings, and Jeremy saw something he wanted in his life...a loving, supportive family that attends church and has fun together. Church has become important to Jeremy. "Before, I never went to church regularly," he said. "Epworth gave me the chance and the freedom to explore a relationship with God. As a result, I'm starting to care less about how people look at me. Now, when I'm nervous, I think about Jesus, what he went through when he was persecuted, and it helps take me out of myself and my fears. "

His faith and personal discipline have helped Jeremy turn the difficult challenges in his young life into strengths. "I've never vaped or used drugs," he said. "I pride myself on staying away from that kind of thing and resisting peer pressure. I've seen how it's where a lot of lives go wrong." Jeremy started college this fall. He is also pleased that while living at Epworth his father began calling him regularly from prison. Like others in Jeremy's expanding circle of support, Jeremy's dad is rooting for him to succeed.

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**Rhonda Goodwin ..... Nursery Worker**

*...TO BE CHRIST TO ALL PEOPLE BY LIVING OUT GOD'S CALL  
TO LOVE, SERVE, AND TRANSFORM THE WORLD.*