



*Are You With Me?*

# Christmas Isn't Over Yet

*By the Rev. TaeWon Kang*

**M**erry Christmas and Happy New Year to you!

Have you had a Merry Christmas with your family and friends? Do not forget that *Christmas is not over yet*. Christmas does not mean the one day, which is on December 25 but lasts for twelve days until Epiphany, which is January 6. It's Christmastide, the season of Christmas. Biblically and liturgically Christmas ends with the story of the Magi in the Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12.

The Magi story is one of the most popular Christmas stories. We begin with this story every single New Year's. It's the story of the first worshipers who followed the heavenly light, rather than the earthly light, and worshiped the newborn King - Christ Child. It should be our faith story because we are believers and worshipers in the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, simply, let us follow God's light rather than our worldly lights throughout 2024.

Do not forget that various stereotypes that we have cannot make a difference. God's way to be with us is not stereotypical at all. Rather, it is the opposite and even subversive. We can hear and see it through Christmas stories like the story of the Magi. After worshiping the Christ Child, they went back to their own country, not by the route that they had come but by another. They did not follow their own stereotypes. **They simply followed the words of God** given through a dream.

We know through the whole story of the Magi that they also traveled from the east to Jerusalem to meet the newborn king. They had **followed the light of the star**. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they first visited King Herod to meet the newborn King. They followed their

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## Greenwood Prayer Ministry

Our Nation

The People of Greenwood and Our Mission Projects

People in Harm's Way Around the World

The Brooks Family, Roger Eckwright, Lori Lohr,

Riley Patteson, Lacye Ryan, Juanita Sharpe, Robbie Smith, Bob Stapleton,

Tom and Lucy Stephens and Family, Libby Stout, Pablo Sumar,

Catherine Wallace



*In Need  
of Your  
Prayers*



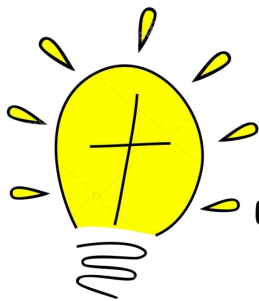
## Are You With Me?

# Christmas Isn't Over Yet

*(Continued from page 1)*

common sense and knowledge that the newborn King must be in a palace. However, the Christ Child was not there. They had to leave there.

The **light of the star continued to guide their way** and then stood over the place, Bethlehem, where the Christ Child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with *JOY*. They *entered* the house and *saw* the Christ Child - the newborn King. They *knelt* before him, *honored* him, and *presented* him with three treasures, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, which meant the treasures for a king. Please see the five verbs – *entered, saw, knelt, honored, and presented*. These are the verbs for a worshiping body. And let us remember that to worship is to express JOY to God.



**YOU ARE  
THE LIGHT  
OF THE WORLD**

Friends, **faith in Jesus Christ can be translated into change, difference, or newness.** I encourage you to be open and move forward to change, difference, or newness without fear, in Christ Jesus. It's because Jesus Christ is Emmanuel, God-With-Us.

In this year 2024, I hope and **bless all of Greenwood UMC** will follow the light of God thoroughly, and joyfully and faithfully worship God with your whole body, mind, and spirit. Through doing so, we may be implementing God's call: "Rise and shine" (Isaiah 60:1).

**We are called to be divine lights in the world.** Friends, we can RISE whenever we face life challenges and difficulties. We can SHINE the light of Christ toward a world that is thickened by darkness. Once again, it's because of Jesus Christ, the Emmanuel: God-With-Us. Happy New Year to you all. AMEN.



*Greenwood's  
January  
Communion Offering*

**PASTORS  
DISCRETIONARY FUND**





## Editor's Privilege:

# Frances Stalnaker, My Mom

*By Steve Stalnaker, Twig Bender Editor*

I'm going to take a point of personal privilege as your newsletter editor and write about my Mother, Frances Ansel Stalnaker, who passed away last month.

A child of the Great Depression – born in 1929 – Mom experienced the hardship of poverty and of being orphaned before she was 10 years old. Later, Mom had to deal with a failed first marriage and the challenges of being a young, single mother in the early 1950s.

By the grace of God, Mom overcame these challenges through her faith. She was raised by a loving aunt and uncle and in 1952 was blessed with marriage to the love of her life, my Dad, Howard Stalnaker. Mom and Dad enjoyed the blessings of a Christian family life, making a loving home for me, my Sister and my Brother, until Dad was called home by God in 2008.

In the intervening years, Mom always missed being with Dad. She once told me that she didn't mind dying because she knew she'd be reunited in Heaven with the love of her life through God's faithfulness and through her Savior, Jesus Christ.

Mom suffered from renal, cardiac and respiratory health issues all summer and fall. She eventually got tired of repeated trips to the hospital emergency room and entered hospice care.

She passed away in her home with my Brother and Sister at her side. All her kids, her six grand kids and her four great-grandchildren are sorry to be separated from her, but we're convinced that she's where she wanted to be, in Heaven with God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and our Dad. We all feel privileged to have been a part of her life. We know that God has given her rest and peace.

Amen.

*Thanks to all the People of Greenwood who prayed for my Mother and family, as well as for all the calls, texts, cards and emails of condolence. If you'd like to read more about Frances, go to:*

<https://www.daviswatkins.com/obituary/Frances-Stalnaker>.



*Frances Ansel  
Stalnaker*

*March 10, 1929 —  
December 4, 2023*



*Frances and a future  
newsletter editor,  
circa 1949.*



# Transplant Thanks

By Lori Lohr

Many of you may remember reading a fairly recent *Twig Bender* article ([October 2023](#)) where I shared my experience of waiting for a kidney and pancreas transplant. I'd been on dialysis for three years at that point and was on the approved waiting list to receive both organs. It was just a matter of time.

I don't think that the ink was dry on that *Twig Bender* when I got the call to prepare to be at the hospital at 6 a.m. on October 4, 2023, to get the transplants. If I had known that all I had to do was to write an article for our church newsletter to make the transplants happen, you all would have read that article a long time ago! Now, I certainly realize that wasn't that action, specifically, that set the wheels in motion, but I do know that it was **God at work!**



After he had heard the transplant news, your (always hilarious) *Twig Bender* editor sent me this text message: "Congrats on rendering your last newsletter article obsolete!" and it truly made me laugh out loud. He was right ... I have turned the corner and am currently living in the fun-filled summer of my life that I had been hoping and praying for.

Receiving those transplants has been, without a doubt, the greatest blessing that I have ever received. And I thank God for that blessing each and every day. I also want to thank my church family at Greenwood. You all have been praying for me all along – and you've shown Jon and me an outpouring of love and support since the day of the

*(Continued on page 5)*

## No Men's Breakfast this Month

The Moose is taking January off, so join the Men of Greenwood in February for the Men's Breakfast.



## Greenwood's Women's Circles

**THE RUTH CIRCLE** will not meet in January but will resume meetings in February.

**THE WILLING WORKERS CIRCLE** will meet on Thursday, Jan. 4 at 5:30 p.m. at the church.



# Transplant Thanks

*(Continued from page 4)*

transplants. Pastor TaeWon visited the hospital and checked in with us frequently.

When I had to go back to the hospital (after being at home for a short two days when my hemoglobin dropped to a dangerous level) he was there in the emergency room with Jon. The number of gifts, cards, calls, texts and e-mails was almost overwhelming! **We were touched by everyone** who reached out to offer love and support.



**And the meals!** I hadn't forgotten about those! I've always known that **Methodists love to eat**, and we take our food seriously. This congregation proved that in a big way. We had dinner provided to us each night for over two weeks! It really helped out at a time when Jon was trying to work as much as possible and take care of me. Not having to worry about what we were having for dinner or having to cook it was another absolute gift and **blessing**. Thank you to all who brought meals to us. We are forever grateful for you and those meals. **We ate very well** and appreciate all that you did for us out of the kindness of your hearts. Side note: I'm pretty sure that Jon wishes that we could have a permanent meal train ... you all went above and beyond with your meals, and I only cook like that on holidays or special occasions! Thank you again.

**A very special thank you goes out to Betty Ritchie**, who coordinated the entire meal train process. In addition, she and Raymond brought dinner on two occasions, and also made sure that Lewis Daniel delivered our Thanksgiving Fellowship dinner – well outside of his normal delivery zone! I've said for years that **I want to be like Betty when I grow up**, and I've never meant that more than I do now! She is one of a kind and her heart is bigger than my new kidney and pancreas put together!

I'm so excited to see what my future holds and where these new organs will take me ... and I know that I am only in the summer of my life right now **because of God** and my supportive, loving, caring, kind and generous family at Greenwood UMC. Thanks again for everything! Much love to you all.

## Tuesday Prayer Call

8 a.m. every Tuesday

Dial in at (605) 313-5873, enter access code: 3108329, press #.

Please mute your phone unless you're adding a prayer.





## Greenwood Learning Center

# Kids Give Gifts

*By Trish Hayes, GLC Lead*

We hope that everyone had a very Merry Christmas with your friends and family. We had such a wonderful month in the Learning Center and we are so very grateful to everyone who helped make this magical season special for us.



*GLC kiddos and 2023 Mitten Tree.*

To Susan and everyone at Aggie’s Attic, thank you so very much for our new Christmas tree on which to hang all the generous donations. Also thank you to everyone for donating the hats, scarfs and gloves, we will be taking them to the Salvation Army at the end of this month.

We also had so much fun making a list of toys to buy with the money we made selling our handmade ornaments at the Brunswick Stew Sale, and then going to “Toys For Tots” and turning them in. The kiddos were so very proud of themselves to see the project all the way through, from making of the ornaments with their hands to buying toys to fit their gift getter (they were very picky how they spent their money) to dropping them off at “Toys For Tots.” They each chose a child the same age and gender as them, so shopping was easy. They also each wrote the gift getter a letter wishing them a Merry Christmas. I am very proud of them and feel this taught them joy of giving this season.

As we have done the last several years, we made Christmas gifts for our parents. We made ornaments of snowman handprints and balls with a ribbon inside that is the same length as us, as well beautiful glitter balls. The parents love getting these gifts as much as kiddos love making them, as they can take them out each year and compare how much they have grown.

Well, here is hoping the magic of the season follows everyone into the New Year and finds everyone safe and happy in 2024.





# Aggie's Attic Volunteer Opportunities

The Attic is in need of Volunteers beginning in 2024, and hope that you can help us out.

We need to find a volunteer to work the first and/or the second Friday of each month and the first and/or second Saturday of each month beginning this month.

We have till March to find people to work the fifth Friday and Saturday. If they can't work every fifth Friday or Saturday, maybe they could work just one or maybe two.

Here are the needs for fifth Fridays and Saturdays in 2024.

- March needs both Friday and Saturday.
- May needs only Friday.
- June needs just Saturday.
- August needs both Friday and Saturday.
- November needs both Friday and Saturday.



If you are willing and able to help, please contact Susan Johnston via call or text at (804) 869-7098 or by e-mail at [ksngal@aol.com](mailto:ksngal@aol.com) You can also help by spreading the word. We've gotten many volunteers over the years by word of mouth.

Aggie's Attic is a Greenwood UMC mission project, located at 6913 Lakeside Avenue, Henrico. Hours: Wednesday through Saturday 11 a.m. — 4 p.m. Click [here](#) for Aggie's Facebook page.

Thank you for your continued support of this meaningful mission!



## Recycle Your Christmas Cards!

[St. Jude's Ranch for Children](#) is accepting the fronts of your used Christmas cards (except Hallmark, American Greetings and Disney due to copyright laws) for their recycling program providing disadvantaged teens with life and work skills.

Please mail your unwanted cards to: St. Jude's Ranch for Children, 100 St. Jude's St., Boulder City, NV 89005. They also accept new cards (any occasion) with or without the envelopes. Please do not send cards promoting other charitable organizations.





# Communications Survey Results

By Steve Stalaker, Greenwood Communications Committee Chair

Thanks to all the members of the Greenwood Church Family who took the time to provide us feedback on the *Twig Bender* through our Communications Survey last month.



We're still tabulating and evaluating the results as this edition of your newsletter goes to press, but we have one conclusion already: *a color printed newsletter isn't worth the extra cost*. Seventy-nine percent of those responding said so. Therefore, going forward, we won't be printing the paper *Twig Bender* in color as we've been doing for the past few months.

I regret this, but I respect our readers' will. The online edition of your monthly *Twig Bender* will continue to be in color. You can access the online editions, going back to 2019, at the Greenwood website:

[www.gumcva.org](http://www.gumcva.org).

Watch for more survey results next month. Thanks again for your support and feedback.

## Greenwood Stewardship

Last month, the church Administrative Council approved an increase in Pastor TaeWon's compensation package for 2024. This increase amounts to less than \$1000 per month. So, consider giving a bit extra this year — if 10 of us give an extra \$20 each week, we could cover this budget increase.

At right is December's attendance and giving.

December 2023		
Attendance and Giving		
Date	Present	Giving
12/03	25	\$3,051
12/10	31	\$2,761
12/17	39	\$1,811
12/24	42	\$1,937
12/31	Unavailable at press time	



### Sign Up for Altar Flowers

There's a new flower calendar for 2024 posted in the back hall. You're invited to donate altar flowers in memory of or in honor of, those you'd like to remember.

Cost of the altar flowers is \$20; please pay in advance.





# Poinsettias 2023

Given to the Glory of God and in Memory of:

**Betty and Hugh Lloyd, Jr.**

*By Janice and Charley Banks*

**Mary and Hugh Lloyd, Sr.**

*By Nancy Lloyd*

**William Gibbs**

*By Jean Mowatt*

**Our Parents**

*By Adamarye and Riley Patteson*

**Frances Stalnaker**

*By Steve and Glenda Stalnaker*

**Our Parents**

*By Bob and Gay Stapleton*

**Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence N. Stout, Sr.**

**Mr. and Mrs. Russell Milby**

*By Libby and Lawrence Stout*

Given to the Glory of God and in Honor of:

**Our Family**

*By Bob and Gay Stapleton*

**My Family in Louisiana, Texas, Florida**

*By Bob Stapleton*



## Greenwood Church Family Birthdays



Bonnie Deane .....1/1  
 Susan Johnston .....1/4  
 Linda Walker .....1/6  
 Jeremy Coleman .....1/10  
 Patricia Davis Lawson .....1/16  
 Warren Murphey .....1/20

Kaye Powell ..... 1/20  
 Jaliyah Shuler .....1/26  
 Jayden Shuler .....1/26  
 Betty Ross .....1/29  
 John Johnston..... 1/29

*Don't see your birthday or wedding anniversary in The Twig Bender and would like to have us publish it? Send your dates to [admin@qumcva.org](mailto:admin@qumcva.org) or call the church office at 804-266-5341; likewise, let us know if you'd like your birthday or anniversary **removed**.*



# Food Donation Connection

Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who picked up food, gave food and handed out food on Friday nights. We couldn't do it without your help and support.

We served 58 families in November.

## *January Pick Up Rotation*

Wednesday, Jan. 3: Charley Banks; Thursday, Jan. 4: Gay and Bob Stapleton; Friday, Jan. 5: Glenda and Steve Stalnaker.


Wednesday, Jan. 10: Jean Mowatt and Lori Lohr; Thursday, Jan. 11: Susan Johnston; Friday, Jan. 12: James Calderone.

Wednesday, Jan. 17: Charley Banks; Thursday, Jan. 18: Gay and Bob Stapleton; Friday, Jan. 19: Glenda and Steve Stalnaker.

Wednesday, Jan. 24: Jean Mowatt and Lori Lohr; Thursday, Jan. 25: Susan Johnston; Friday, Jan. 26: James Calderone.


Wednesday, Jan. 31: Charley Banks; Thursday, Feb. 1: Gay and Bob Stapleton; Friday, Feb. 2: Glenda and Steve Stalnaker.





## Prayer Request Email

For prayer requests only: [greenwoodprays@gmail.com](mailto:greenwoodprays@gmail.com)  
 Monitored daily by Pastor TaeWon; all emails in strict confidence.



## JANUARY SCRIPTURES

Jan. 7	Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11.
Jan. 14	1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51.
Jan. 21	Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20.
Jan. 28	Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28.



# Go Paperless

If you're receiving a paper copy of *The Twig Bender* through the snail mail (a.k.a. U.S. Postal Service), consider going paperless. Save Greenwood the cost of postage, paper, toner, labels, stickers and labor involved in printing, folding, stamping and mailing out paper copies of our newsletter.

Remember, *The Twig Bender* is always available online at Greenwood's web site at <https://www.gumcva.org/twig-bender-archives>. There you'll also find newsletter archives going back through the beginning of 2019 (and we'll be adding more archives as the webmaster gets the time).



We realize, however, that many of us (including your editor) prefer a "hard copy" to hold in our hands while we read. That's OK, and we'll continue to publish paper copies of *The Twig Bender*.

To go paperless, email the church office at [admin@gumcva.org](mailto:admin@gumcva.org), call the office at 804-266-5341 or just tell your newsletter editor.

Likewise, if you no longer want to receive the monthly *Twig Bender* in any form – paper or by email – please let us know.

But, don't select a paperless *Twig Bender* only because you might think paperless saves the environment. It doesn't necessarily. Think about it:

- Paper is a biodegradable, renewable, sustainable product made from trees.
- Growing and harvesting trees provides jobs for millions of Americans.
- Forests are good for the environment and provide clean air and water, wildlife habitat and carbon storage.
- Thanks to improved forest management, we have more trees in America today than we had 100 years ago, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

It's your choice: paper or plastic ... er ... electronic. Let us know, please.



## Welcome Richmond Beekeepers



The Richmond Beekeepers Association meets in the Greenwood Fellowship Hall the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.





# Greenwood United Methodist Church January 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 New Year's Day</p> 	<p>2 Science Fiction Day</p> <p>8 a.m. Prayer Call</p> 	<p>3 JRR Tolkien Day</p> 	<p>4 5:30 p.m. Willing Workers Circle</p> <p>6:30 p.m. Choir Practice</p>	<p>5 6 p.m. Food Distribution</p> 	<p>6 Epiphany</p> 	
<p>7 Communion Sunday</p> <p>9:30 a.m. Sunday School</p> <p>11 a.m. Worship</p> 	<p>8 Earth's Rotation Day</p> 	<p>9 8 a.m. Prayer Call</p> 	<p>10 Nat'l Save the Eagles Day</p> <p>3 p.m. Finance Committee Meets</p> 	<p>11 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice</p> <p>7 p.m. Richmond Beekeepers</p> 	<p>12 6 p.m. Food Distribution</p> 	<p>13 Make Your Dreams Come True Day</p> 
<p>14 9:30 a.m. Sunday School</p> <p>11 a.m. Worship</p> 	<p>15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</p> 	<p>16 8 a.m. Prayer Call</p> <p>3 p.m. Admin Council</p> 	<p>17 Benjamin Franklin Day</p> 	<p>18 Thesaurus Day</p> <p>6:30 p.m. Choir Practice</p>	<p>19 6 p.m. Food Distribution</p> 	<p>20 Nat'l Cheese Lovers Day</p> 
<b>Friendship Quilters</b>						
<p>21 9:30 a.m. Sunday School</p> <p>11 a.m. Worship</p> 	<p>22 Anzio Invasion 1944</p> 	<p>23 8 a.m. Prayer Call</p> 	<p>24 Compliment Day</p> 	<p>25 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice</p> 	<p>26 6 p.m. Food Distribution</p> 	<p>27  International Holocaust Remembrance Day</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>RIVER CITY RUG HOOKERS</b></p>
<p>28 9:30 a.m. Sunday School</p> <p>11 a.m. Worship</p> 	<p>29 Puzzle Day</p> 	<p>30 8 a.m. Prayer Call</p> 	<p>31 Nat'l Hot Chocolate Day</p> 	<p><b>JANUARY IS NATIONAL BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION MONTH</b></p> 		



# Mark Your Calendars

- Feb. 14..... Ash Wednesday/St. Valentine’s Day
- Feb. 19..... Presidents Day
- March 17 ..... St. Patrick’s Day
- March 24 ..... Palm Sunday
- March 29 ..... Good Friday
- March 31 ..... Easter Sunday
- April 15..... Tax Day
- May 12..... Mother’s Day
- May 27..... Memorial Day

## Greenwood UMC Mission

*The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. — Matt. 28:19*

## Greenwood Vision

<b>Loving</b>	»	<b>Growing</b>	»	<b>Serving</b>
Learning to love and connect with God and People		Acquiring tools for being transformed into the image of		Participating in church ministry and community outreach



## The Twig Bender

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