



Prayer List

Our Nation

- Our Church Families
- GUMC Learning Ctr.
- Troy Eckwright
- Mounayar Family
- Adamarye Patteson
- Lacye Ryan
- Leonett Reese
- Arline and David Shafer
- Carolyn Smith
- Cameron Smucker
- Frances Stalnaker

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A Christmas Story

By Steve Stalnaker

Here’s a Christmas story with a [mostly] happy ending. I always think of the men and women in the U.S. military who can’t be back home with their families at Christmastime. In December 1980 my ship was in south-east Asia. I got an early Christmas present then: I helped rescue 260 Vietnamese refugees. This is the greatest personal achievement of my U.S. Navy career.

In early December 1980, my ship, the *USS Robison* DDG-12, was conducting naval maneuvers with the Royal Thai Navy in the Gulf of Thailand. A glance at the globe will show you that this body of water is bordered not only by Thailand, but by Cambodia and Vietnam on the east.

We spotted a 40-foot boat full of people. Being under then-president Carter’s orders to render assistance to any



USS Robison DDG-12: Steve’s Ship in 1980.

Vietnamese refugees we encountered, we investigated.

We discovered scores of people crammed into this decrepit craft. Their engine had failed some days before. They were adrift on the high seas, out of food and low on fresh water. They were packed in like captives on a slave ship. Later, we learned that some had committed suicide by jumping overboard in despair, because they saw no hope of rescue.

(Continued on page 10)

From the Pastor

Expectations

The 2021 holiday season has begun. I am grateful to God for answered prayers as this year's Thanksgiving Day most of my immediate family gathered. When it was time for the Thanksgiving blessing, my dad got choked up and the tears came as he started to give thanks to God at the beginning of his prayer. He could not find the words to speak as he was so overwhelmed with the reality that we were all together. I was expecting the usual long and wordy prayer, but it did not come. And then my older daughter looked at me and said, "finish for him" — that was unexpected too. I told her, "I don't know if I can," and she said basically told me to suck it up and get it done. We got through it. God has been good to us.



In the past year and eight months, life as we knew it has completely changed. Now many of us are expecting things to get back to "normal" whatever that is! Lord knows what was should not have been "normal."

Unfortunately, as we have returned to in-person everything, our expectations are unrealistic. Not everybody feels safe to come out, even with vaccinations, boosters and masks. Many are still angry about being forced into quarantine in the first place and refuse to move on. Churches are open, but many people are not ready to return.

(Continued on page 9)



*Greenwood's December
Communion Offering:*
VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF PASTORAL

Greenwood Christmas 2021

Here's What's Happening this Holiday Season

- **Advent Bible Study:** Tuesdays through Dec. 21 at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. See the article on [page 4](#).
- **Poinsettias:** Help the Altar Guild decorate the Sanctuary with these traditional Greenwood holiday flowers, only \$15.00 per plant. Please order by Sunday, Dec. 12 using the form on [page 15](#).
- **Nativity Scenes:** The Altar Guild is decorating the Sanctuary windows with manger scenes on loan from the congregation. If you have a nativity scene you would like to share please call Gay Stapleton at 804-672-8408.
- **Christmas Card Exchange:** trade Christmas greeting cards with the other members of the Greenwood Church Family. Leave your addressed cards in the box in the narthex by Friday, Dec. 17; pick up the cards addressed to you on the following Sundays.
- **White Christmas:** Traditional Greenwood gifts for the Baby Jesus, during worship services on Sunday, Dec. 19.
- **Charge Blue Christmas Service:** at Laurel Park UMC, Sunday, Dec. 19 at 3 p.m.
- **Charge Christmas Eve Service:** 4 p.m. at Greenwood, Friday, Dec. 24.



Greenwood's Women's Circles

The Ruth Circle is taking a break for the holidays and will meet again in February. Adamarye said thanks for all the cards and phone calls.

The Willing Workers supported a family in need from Longdale Elementary School with a Thanksgiving dinner and will be providing Christmas help for them as well.



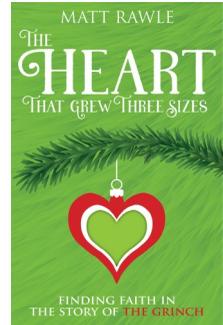
Advent Bible Study In Progress

Greenwood's Advent Bible Study, from the book *The Heart that Grew Three Sizes* by Matt Rawle, continues at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays through Dec. 21.

The Study is exclusively online; no in-person meetings.

Online meeting choices:

- [Zoom.us](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87141702344?pwd=QSt5aXBiR1Zsb094cC9DNUhHT0lpZz09): Meeting ID: 871 4170 2344; Passcode: 669824.
- Or, use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87141702344?pwd=QSt5aXBiR1Zsb094cC9DNUhHT0lpZz09>. Meeting ID: 871 4170 2344; Passcode: 669824.
- Or, listen in by telephone at 301-715-8592; Meeting ID: 871 4170 2344; Passcode: 669824.



Brunswick Stew Sale and Fall Fair

Greenwood's Brunswick Stew Sale and Fall Fair netted, as of press time, \$3,527.87, all of which will go toward Greenwood's missions and operating expenses. We made about 390 quarts of our delicious, world famous Brunswick Stew and sold all but six quarts — if you need some let the church office know — first come, first served.



Stew Master Harry Shuler dispensing stew.

The Silent Auction brought in \$662, the bake sale earned \$258 and various other activities accounted for \$80, plus a \$50 donation for stew ingredients. Stew sales earned \$2,468, after expenses for ingredients and quart containers.

Many thanks to everyone who made this happen. Praise God!

Greenwood Learning Center

The children of Greenwood's after school ministry are again collecting donated hats, mittens and scarves for those in need this winter. You can help with this by leaving your donated items in the narthex or the Fellowship Hall up through Sunday, Dec. 19.

There's another way you can support the Greenwood Learning Center (GLC): help us recruit kids for 2022. Presently we have only three children enrolled in the GLC. The funding these kids' tuition generates is not enough to cover the ministry's expenses: salaries, utilities, etc.

Therefore, our 2022 aim is to increase enrollment to a minimum of ten children by January 2022. Ten children in our ministry will produce enough revenue to "break even," that is, cover all our expenses. Then we will be able to continue our ministry to our neighborhood children.

How can you help? Talk to neighbors and friends about what a great ministry we have here at Greenwood. Maybe not everyone knows that we offer the best value for after school care anywhere around. Our weekly tuition of \$85 is by far the lowest tuition of any day care or after school program in the area. Much more importantly, GLC provides a Christian care environment, including daily devotionals and weekly chapel.

Help us ramp up GLC enrollment so we can continue to provide quality Christian after school care in the new year.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to be a church blessed with the capacity to serve the community on behalf of children," writes Pastor Josette, "Thank you Trish for your giving heart and the way you show up each day of the week for the children in our community."



The kiddos and Miss Trish say "Thank You" to you all for all your help over the last few weeks and to wish you a very "Happy Thanksgiving!"

A Candy Maker's Witness

Contributed by Catherine Wallace

A candymaker in Indiana wanted to make a candy that would be a witness, so he made the Christmas candy cane. He incorporated several symbols for the birth, ministry and death of Jesus Christ.

He began with a stick of pure white, hard candy. White to symbolize the Virgin Birth and the sinless nature of Jesus, and hard to symbolize the Solid Rock, the foundation of the Church, and the firmness of the promises of God.

The candymaker then shaped his cane into the form of a "J" to represent the precious name of Jesus, who came to the earth as our Savior. It could also represent the staff of the "Good Shepherd" with which He reaches down into the ditches of the world to lift out the fallen lambs who, like sheep, have gone astray.

Thinking that the candy was somewhat plain, the candymaker decorated it with red stripes. He used three small stripes to remember the scourging Jesus endured, by which we are healed. The large red stripe was for the blood shed by Christ on the cross so that we could have the promise of eternal life.

Unfortunately, the candy became known as a candy cane – a meaningless decoration seen at Christmastime. But the meaning is still there for those who “have eyes to see and ears to hear.” I pray that this symbol will again be used to witness to THE WONDER OF JESUS AND HIS GREAT LOVE that came down at Christmas and remains the ultimate and dominate force in the universe today.



Get Those Leaves off Your Car

From Consumer Reports Online

Those beautiful autumn leaves can cause problems for your car. In fact, it's best to avoid parking under trees—especially if you're not driving much.

Leaves find their way into a car's nooks and crannies, getting caught under wipers, and clogging air intakes and drain holes, such as those around the sunroof. Plus, wet



leaves contain tree sap, which is acidic and can damage the finish on a car's paint.

If you need to clear leaves from your car, do it carefully, picking them out with your hands or by using a leaf blower with light air pressure. (Too much pressure can cause leaves to become lodged in hard-to-reach places.)

To unclog sunroof drains, you may be tempted to remove debris with a wire hanger, but that can tear the sunroof lining. Instead, use a vacuum to draw out the leaves. Pop the hood to clear leaves near the base of the windshield, where the car's heater intake system is. Then give your car a good rinse.

For tree sap, dab spots with rubbing alcohol on a cloth or try a tree sap remover, such as Turtle Wax's *Bug & Tar Remover*. "To be safe, test any store-bought cleaner on a small spot of paint first," Consumer Reports advises.

Waxing your car once a season also helps protect the paint. If you can't avoid parking under trees, consider investing in a car cover. Better ones tend to cost at least \$100 and are made of multilayered material. (Cheaper, single-layer covers risk trapping moisture and scratching your car.) And don't forget that wet leaves can be just as slippery as ice, so increase your following distance on leaf-strewn roads.

GREENWOOD ON FACEBOOK:
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GUMCVA



Food Donation Connection

By Glenda Stalnak

God does work in mysterious ways. Recently, one of our primary food donors was closed for renovation and Greenwood's food pantry was nearly empty.

At the same time, Chesterbrook Academy was holding a food drive to help their students learn about giving. Voila, through word of mouth about Greenwood's food donation ministry, Chesterbrook provided over 500 individual food items to our food pantry: everything from taco shells to breakfast cereals. Thank you to Brittany Luciano and Chesterbrook Academy!



Praise God for these folks and everyone who volunteers to help with Greenwood's food donation ministry.

December Pick Up Rotation

Wednesday, Dec. 1: Jean Mowatt and William Gibbs; Thursday, Dec. 2: Susan Johnston; Friday, Dec. 3: Josette Franklin.

Wednesday, Dec. 8: Charley Banks; Thursday, Dec. 9: Gay and Bob Stapleton; Friday, Nov. 10: Josette Franklin.

Wednesday, Dec. 15: Jean Mowatt and William Gibbs; Thursday, Dec. 16: Susan Johnston; Friday, Dec. 17: Josette Franklin.

Wednesday, Dec. 22: Charley Banks; Thursday, Dec. 23: Thanksgiving Day; Friday, Dec. 24: Josette Franklin.

Wednesday, Dec. 29: Jean Mowatt and William Gibbs; Thursday, Dec. 30: Susan Johnston; Friday, Dec. 31: Josette Franklin.



Greenwood Stewardship

Despite COVID quarantines and restricted gatherings, Greenwood's expenses still must be paid. Giving is down from last year. We need \$2,424 per week to meet expenses. In November, our weekly giving average was \$1,309 or 54% of what's required.

Expectations

(Continued from page 2)

Schools are still reporting COVID-19 cases weekly. Not all youth are thriving in-person in the classroom. And all of us are suffering from some form of PTSD. Life as we have known it has changed, so too should our expectations.

In *The Heart That Grew Three Sizes*, Matt Rawle, near the end of the first chapter —



“When Everything Is Wrong,” — writes, “Unmet expectations are sometimes the very thing we need.” After everything that has happened, I believe this to be a true statement. If nothing else, it’s reminded me to only put my hope in God; to trust God, and believe all things are possible. I’ve learned: to value quiet time and solitude; that I can do all things through Christ; to extend myself grace; the importance of listening to my body; to be more present for my daughters; and the Church really is not a building.

Unmet expectations invite us: to gratefulness; to view things through heaven’s eyes; to think outside the box; to gain a better and more sustainable perspective on what matters; to be stretched and moved outside our comfort zones; and to realize the potential God has placed on the inside of every one of us.

I know many of our expectations will fall flat and will be unmet. But the one expectation we can be assured of is God is for us and will always be with us.

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”

—Matthew 1:23 NRSV

Peace and blessing to all,

— *Pastor Josette Franklin*

A Christmas Story

(Continued from page 1)

How could we not render assistance to these poor souls?

We broke off our naval exercises and carried out our duty. We brought onboard 264 Vietnamese refugees. Many were in bad shape – four died that night. Our ship’s crew didn’t normally include a doctor, but we just happened to have one who was hitching a ride back to the Philippines. God provided this Navy doctor to help us care for these refugees.

Naval messages burned up the air waves. We were ordered to anchor outside Thai territorial waters while the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) figured out how to deal with what was, up to then, the largest number of Vietnamese refugees rescued at sea.

While we waited, our refugees “camped out” on the ship’s after deck under canvas awnings supported by various shipboard fixtures. I was awestruck as I watched a bunch of rough-and-tumble U.S. Navy sailors open their hearts to these poor people: feeding and clothing them and tending to their medical needs. These sailors were carrying out Jesus’ commandment that we love one another.

Eventually, the UNHCR found a refugee camp ashore in Thailand for our guests.

You needn’t take my word for this. Go to [YouTube](#) and search for “U.S.S. Robison Refugees.” There you’ll find several videos taken by our sailors during this rescue.

This is my Christmas story. It has a mostly happy ending because, of the over 300 refugees that embarked on that horrid boat, we were only able to save 260 of them. But the ones we could save, we did. We cared for them and got them to safety ashore.

I said this was the most important personal achievement of my career. Even though I was separated from my family that Christmas in 1980, I got a great Christmas gift. I thank God for the humanity and hospitality of the crew of the *USS Robison*, and that I got to play a small part in this rescue.

Merry Christmas.



That 40-foot boat full of refugees.



Sunday Worship

Every Sunday at 11 a.m. at Greenwood
And on Zoom (click [here](#)) or dial 301-715-8592
Meeting ID: 829 5710 1589; password: 929829



Also on Facebook Live

Tuesday Prayer Call

Every Tuesday, 8 to 8:15 a.m. on Zoom (click [here](#)) or dial 301-715-8592
Meeting ID: 851 1374 4202; password: 452446

Medicare Open Enrollment Ends Dec. 7
www.medicare.gov



DECEMBER SCRIPTURES

Dec. 5	Malachi 3:1-4; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 1:68-79; Luke 3:1-6
Dec. 12	Isaiah 12:2-6; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18
Dec. 19	Micah 5:2-5a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45; Luke 1:46b-55
Dec. 24	Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
Dec. 26	1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52



Greenwood Church Family Birthdays

Clarence Powell.....	12/9	Jamie Smith.....	12/15
Jonae Shuler.....	12/10	Kathryn Walker.....	12/21
Betty Coleman.....	12/11	Gail Stanley.....	12/28
Cindy Jo Daniel.....	12/11	Daniel Langston.....	12/28
Janice Banks.....	12/13	Jackie Schultz.....	12/31
Mary Cullom.....	12/13		

Anniversaries

Clarence & Kaye Powell12/19



*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@gumcva.org or call the church office at 804-266-5341; likewise, let us know if you'd like your birthday or anniversary **removed**.*



Twig Bender

is a publication of Greenwood United Methodist Church

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In-Person and Virtual Worship: 11 a.m. Sunday

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Education Building Phone:	804-266-6668		

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Greenwood United Methodist Church

December 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 10px; background-color: #d4edda;"> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE TWIG BENDER</p> </div>			1 Eat a Red Apple Day 	2 Nat'l Mutt Day 	3 6 p.m. Food Distribution 	4 8 a.m. Men's Breakfast 
5 11 a.m. In-Person and Virtual Worship	6 St. Nicholas Day 	7 Pearl Harbor Day Medicare Open Enrollment Ends 8 a.m. Prayer Call 6:30 p.m. Ad-	8 National Brownie Day 	9 7 p.m. Richmond Beekeepers 	10 6 p.m. Food Distribution 	11 Nat'l Wreaths Across America Day <div style="background-color: purple; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Friendship Quilters </div>
12 Int'l Children's Day Poinsettia Orders Due 11 a.m. In-Person and Virtual Worship	13 Ice Cream Day 	14 8 a.m. Prayer Call 6:30 p.m. Advent Bible Study	15 Bill of Rights Day 	16 Nat'l Chocolate Covered Anything Day 	17 6 p.m. Food Distribution 	18 Bake Cookies Day 
19 11 a.m. White Christmas 11 a.m. In-Person and Virtual Worship 3 p.m. Blue	20 Go Caroling Day 	21 Winter Solstice 8 a.m. Prayer Call 6:30 p.m. Advent Bible Study	22 Forefathers Day 	23 Twig Bender Deadline 	24 Christmas Eve 4 p.m. Charge Christmas Eve Service at GUMC 6 p.m. Food Distribution	25 Christmas Day 
26 11 a.m. In-Person and Virtual Worship	27 Nat'l Fruitcake Day 	28 8 a.m. Prayer Call 	29 Tick-Tock Day 	30 Bacon Day 	31 New Year's Eve 6 p.m. Food Distribution 	January 1, 2022 New Year's Day 

Mark Your Calendars

Jan. 1, 2022	New Year's Day
Jan. 9, 2022	Epiphany
Jan. 17, 2022	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Feb. 14, 2022	St. Valentine's Day
March 2, 2022	Ash Wednesday
April 15, 2022	Good Friday
April 17, 2022	Easter Sunday
June 5, 2022	Pentecost

Our Mission

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Matt. 28:19

Our Vision

*Loving
Growing
Serving*



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church™

Greenwood Poinsettias 2021

Order Poinsettias through Sunday, December 12.

Clip out this form, complete it and then mail it, with your payment, to the church office at the address on the facing page, or drop this form, along with payment, in the church offering plate at Sunday worship services.

Poinsettias will be on the altar on Sunday, December 19.

Number of poinsettias: _____

Ordered by: _____

In Memory of:

In Honor of:

*Each poinsettia plant is \$15; **payment must accompany order.** Please make checks out to Greenwood UMC with "poinsettias" on the memo line.*

Thanks for helping decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas!

