



Time To Prepare!

“You don’t have to be rich to be generous; you just need a heart that is willing to serve.”

– Anonymous (YouVersion Daily Devotional from November 1, 2023)

This year has truly flown by! It blows my mind that this is the December newsletter. As I sit here and write, so many people in the country are preparing for Thanksgiving meals, preparing their homes for guests, preparing their bags for travel, preparing their work for a holiday – **preparing**. The word prepare means “to put together” or “make something ready for use or consideration.” As we prepare for the season of Advent, how can we as a church body do this effectively and with the mind of Christ?

In fact, to go deeper, **what are we preparing for?**

There are so many wonderful events that come along with this season and a great amount of preparation is put into place to make sure these events go smoothly. It’s one of my most favorite seasons in our church. With it comes hope, love, generosity, kindness, fellowship, and all the nostalgic memories of Christmases past. People are jolly-er, holly-er, and happier – or are they?

To some, this season is only a reminder of loss – loss of a loved one who will not be there to celebrate, loss of a relationship, loss of income due to unforeseen circumstances, loss because of the lack of funds to support Christmas presents under the tree – **loss**. This is a season where we as a church body can reach out to those who are experiencing loss and, family, we may not have to step too far beyond our “walls.” This is the perfect season for stepping out of the box of traditional “church” and being the “light to shine for all to see that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven,” not for our glory but for His (Matthew 5:16). This is a season of giving – not only with our money but our time and resources. You may ask, “How can I give any more than I already do?” That is between you and God. Jesus said in Luke 6:38, “Give and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full – pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured out. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”

Have you received the blessings of giving? Can you testify to how your gifts have returned to you and you received a blessing from being a blessing? I have. I have been on both ends of the giving and receiving. Both are very humbling events when done out of God’s goodness and grace. Paul says in Philippians 4:19, “my God will supply all your needs according to His riches.” Not OUR riches, not OUR work, but *HIS*. When we give with a grateful heart, full of faith and hope that God will help us, we need not fear that we won’t have enough in our reserve. He will supply according to His riches. In faith, we can count on God to return our time, our talents, and our resources back to us, overflowing when our hearts are aligned with Christ’s.

So how can we as a church body prepare our hearts for this season of giving?

First of all, prayer. Allow yourself the time and space of refreshment and relationship with Jehovah Jireh (The God of Provision). Spend time in conversation with God and ask Him to show you ways to serve others, and then ask Him to give you the ability to carry out His will. **Secondly, forgive.** Now is the time to forgive those who have offended you. There is no room for generosity when resentment and bitterness are taking up space in our hearts. We are called to live in peace with our fellow believers (Romans 12:16). Ask God to grant you forgiveness of heart and mind because He has so graciously forgiven you. **And lastly, take time to fellowship with other believers.** This revives the soul and encourages you to continue the good work.

Are you looking for ways to serve this holiday season? Ask our church administration about opportunities to help our church and community. Do you yourself need help this holiday season? Let someone in our church know that you need help. Do you know a way our church can serve? Tell us! New ideas are always welcome. Carthage UMC is a gracious and generous church. This body of Christ longs to love on our own and help those of us who are in need, but we cannot help if we don't know.

My prayer this season of Advent is that CUMC will prepare to be a light for all to see God's glory and kingdom building; that we may open our hearts and make room for others; make room for giving, make room for loving, make room for serving, make room for Christ. When we make room by cleaning out all the negative corners of our hearts, we can make room for Jesus and align our hearts with His. Let's get excited about the opportunities where we can shine His light, and may we carry out the spirit of love and generosity into the coming year!

May peace and blessings be with you,

Jodi Gammon

THE CUMC CATCH-UP

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS

Happy December, Friends!

Blessings from the Children's Ministry! November was a wonderful month for us, as we got to prepare for our Christmas program and also spread cheer in the Carthage Christmas Parade.

Our Wednesday fellowship and fun nights will continue through during December until schools break for Christmas. **Make sure to join us on December 6 for an all-ages Christmas craft night and caroling on December 13!**

Also, be sure to join us **this Sunday, December 3rd at 5:30PM for our Family Christmas Program**, featuring music and a special play from the children.

As always, thank you for being a congregation who loves and supports our kiddos and the Children's Ministry as they grow with God!

Nicole Harriman, Director of Children's Ministry

COMING UP NEXT FOR CUMC KIDS



THE CUMC CATCH-UP

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

A Very Youth Group Christmas

Merry Christmas, all! Plenty of Youth Group fun is still to come in these last few weeks of December. While Gavin, Carley, Kristi, Monica, and I are away in Uganda, our Youth will be in good hands with Ms. Nicole. **Our Wednesday Night Gatherings for the next two weeks will be joined with the Children's Ministry – Family Christmas Craft Night (December 6) and Comfort + Joy Caroling (December 13).**

We will also be hosting a **Youth Christmas Party on December 20 at 6:00PM.** They'll have the opportunity to put those Big Brain Bucks they've been earning during our *Defenders of the Faith* series to good use on fun gifts and snacks.

Lastly, our final trip of the year will be to see the film, *Journey To Bethlehem!* **This trip is tentatively scheduled for December 21 or 22 (screening confirmation pending).** Updates will be provided in the weeks to come as theaters release their screening schedules.

Thank you for all you do to make YG at CUMC possible!

Tucker Huseh, Director of Youth Ministry

COMING UP NEXT FOR CUMC YOUTH

A VERY YG *Christmas* → DECEMBER 2023

↘ **TBD** **JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM**
Trip Includes Dinner + Movie Screening

↘ **06TH WED** **CHRISTMAS CRAFT NIGHT**
with the CUMC Children's Ministry

↘ **13TH WED** **COMFORT + JOY CAROLING**
with the CUMC Children's Ministry

↘ **20TH WED** **YG CHRISTMAS PARTY**

THE CUMC CATCH-UP

MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS

Thank You, CUMC Handbell Choir!

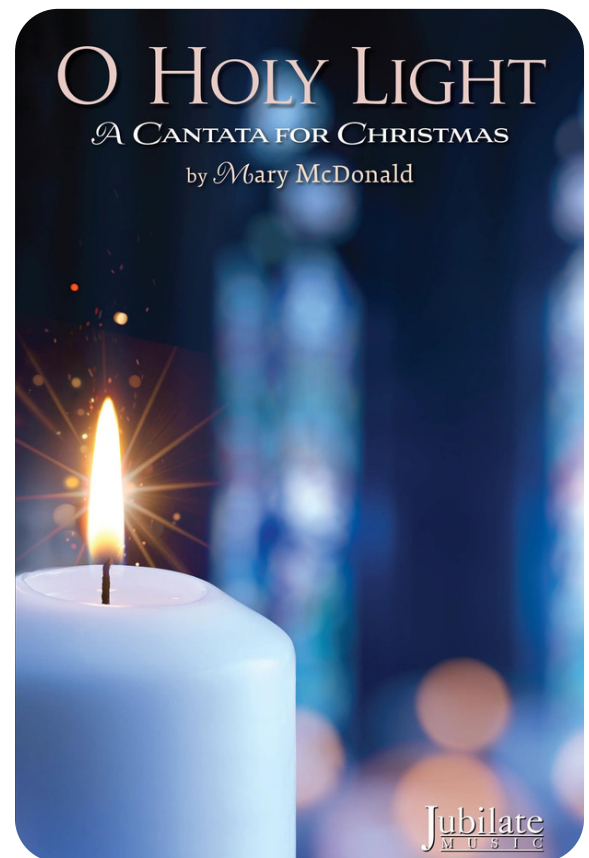
Our congregation was so blessed by the CUMC Handbell Choir's worship set this past Sunday at the 10:00AM service, which featured the songs "Breathe On Me, O Breath of God" and "Blessing." Thank you for sharing your gifts and gorgeous music with us, ladies!

O Holy Light Christmas Cantata with Barton's Creek Baptist Church

The CUMC Choir is proud to bring you a wonderful time of worship this Christmas season in partnership with Barton's Creek Baptist Church of Lebanon. Both nights will have a reception with light refreshments following the performance.

December 10 • 6:00PM
Barton's Creek Baptist Church

December 17 • 6:00PM
Carthage United Methodist Church



The Bert Coble Singers' Annual Christmas Dinner Show December 7-9 at 7:00PM | Baird Chapel (Cumberland University)

The time-honored tradition returns this December! A number of folks from our CUMC Choir add their voices to this Christmas collective and would love to see you there. Tickets are \$50.00 and may be purchased at www.bertcoblesingers.com.

Jennifer Perry, Director of Music Ministry

THE CUMC CATCH-UP

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Greetings, Church Family!

It is hard to believe that we are at the end of the year. Because of the compassion of the members of this church, we accomplished many improvement projects this year including:

- Replacing the roof over the sanctuary side of the building.
- Mitigating water damage in the basement.
- Replacing the back doors at the bottom of the steps in the CLC.
- Replacing the fence around the playground.

The Finance Committee is gathering budgets from the various committees in our church and will present the budget at the January church council meeting.

Thank you for being a giving church all year round! If you need an update on your contributions during this giving season, you can do that in the church office. As a reminder, contributions can be made via our weekly offering during the 8:00AM or 10:00AM Sunday service, at the church office, and [online via MyVanco](#). Blessings!

Heather Gammon, Finance Committee Chair

THE CUMC CATCH-UP

CHURCH + COMMUNITY NEWS

Church Staff Christmas Bags Available in the Gathering Area

Make this Christmas merry for our wonderful staff! Gift bags with each staff member's name are in the Gathering Area if you would like to give them a gift or write them a note. (For checks, please make them out to each staff member individually.) **Bags will be available through Sunday, December 17th.**



Pickleball at Carthage UMC Weekdays | Church Life Center (CLC)

Have a ball with us **every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 8:30AM or Tuesday at 6:00PM.** Players of all experience levels are welcome. No equipment required. Questions? Contact Liz Carver, Joann James, or Mary Leslie and Randy Wakefield.



End of Year Offerings

Offerings received by December 24th will be deposited in 2023 and will appear on 2023 contribution statements. Offerings received **after December 24th will be deposited in 2024** and will **NOT** appear on 2023 contribution statements. Thank you for your generosity this year!



Thanksgiving Bakeware Lost + Found

A casserole dish has been left from the Community Thanksgiving last Thursday. If you provided food for the meal and are missing a dish, contact David Bass.



THE CUMC CATCH-UP

COMING UP AT CUMC

Family Christmas Program **December 3 | 5:30PM**

Join us for music and a special play full of Christmas magic put on by the children that's bound to make your spirits bright! Hors d'oeuvres will be served at 5:30PM, with the show to follow at 6:00PM. Contact Nicole Harriman to bring a snackable or sweet treat!

Family Christmas Craft Night **December 6 | 6:00PM**

Ms. Nicole and friends are having a night of creativity and Christmas fun. Kids from 1-92 welcome!

***Our Just Peace* Advent Special** **December 10 | 8:00AM + 10:00AM**

Join us in person at 8:00AM or 10:00AM for a special Advent service featuring recent Revival speaker, Rev. Jefferson Furtado!

Comfort + Joy Caroling **December 13 | 5:00PM**

Help us spread the Christmas spirit through song to the Smith County Health and Rehabilitation Center, The Pavilion Senior Living Center, and to church members in our community. Our chorus will be traveling via shuttle bus, so please meet at CUMC by 5:00PM.

Church-Wide Christmas Breakfast **December 17 | 8:45AM**

Make plans to enjoy the fabulous food, fun, and fellowship of the annual Christmas Church-Wide Breakfast, lovingly prepared by the men and women of Carthage UMC. As always, bring your appetite!

***O Holy Light* Christmas Cantata** **December 17 | 6:00PM**

Filled with beloved carols and exciting songs from the inimitable Mary McDonald, this cantata captures the many moods of Christmas with a fresh voice. A reception with light refreshments will follow the performance.



Blue Christmas Service **December 21 | 6:00PM**

Sometimes, Christmas hurts. This quiet and contemplative worship service is a place to honor the grief and hardship that can come in the midst of the holiday season.

Christmas Meals on Wheels **December 23 | 8:00AM**

Help us cook, pack, and deliver 200 meals to members of our community in need of a delicious Christmas feast! A clip board will be passed through the pews in the next couple of weeks, so be ready to sign up as you are able.

Christmas Eve Services **December 24 | 10:00AM, 6:00PM, 11:00PM**

Celebrate the birth of our beloved Savior!

MORNING SERVICES - 10:00AM ONLY

CANDLELIGHT EVENING SERVICES - 6:00PM + 11:00PM

New Year's Morning Service **December 31 | 10:00AM**

Ring in the new year with worship and praise!

MORNING SERVICES - 10:00AM ONLY

SUNDAY SCHOOL - LEADER'S DISCRETION

THE CUMC CATCH-UP

CELEBRATE + CONNECT

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Frances Donaldson	12/01
Lilly Turner	12/01
Walter G. Birdwell	12/02
Avery Flemmons	12/02
Isaac Bush	12/03
Callie Rollin	12/04
Jim Cowan	12/04
Corinne Manning	12/04
Clara England	12/06
Tommy Parker	12/07
Tom Paschal	12/07
Tyrone Poynter	12/07
Benjamin Bass	12/08
Bonnie Grandstaff	12/09
Lee Davis	12/10
Cecelia Hudson	12/10
Susan Myrick	12/12
Logan Carlyle	12/13
Jodi Gammon	12/13
Dirk Kruzan	12/13
Garrett Kemp	12/15
Tracy Banka	12/17
Stephen Laszlo	12/17
Sarah Smith	12/18
Amelia Bush	12/19
Caleb Odbert	12/19
Zach Upchurch	12/20
Faith Good	12/21
Rocky Good	12/21
Barbara Upchurch	12/22
Tracey Kemp	12/24
Dawn Bass	12/27
Larry Turner	12/28
Carrington Jenkins	12/29
Christina Massey	12/29
Terry Coggins	12/31

**RECENTLY MOVED?
JUST MARRIED?
NEW MEMBER?**

**Contact the church office to
have your info updated!**

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jane deLong	01/01
Katie King	01/02
Phillip Hudson, Jr.	01/03
Tommy Ballinger	01/04

ANNIVERSARIES

DECEMBER

Roy and Louise Ethridge	12/02
Rocky and Sarah Good	12/21
Glenn and Nancy Pettross	12/21
Doug and Jane deLong	12/28

JANUARY 2024

George and Susan McDonald	01/09
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608 Main Street North
P.O. Box 241
Carthage, TN 37030



www.carthagetnumc.org



615-735-0343



carthageumcsecretary@gmail.com (General Inquiries)
media.carthagetnumc@gmail.com (Events + Newsletter)



Carthage United Methodist Church
Livestream, Facebook + YouTube

**CARTHAGE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
DECEMBER 2023**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					18:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC	2
3 1ST Sunday of Advent COMMUNION 3 – 4 p.m. Pack 367 4 – 5:30 p.m. Troop 367 5:30 p.m. Children's Ministry Christmas Program	4 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC 5 – 7 p.m. The Spot	5 6 p.m. Pickleball/CLC	6 9 – 11 a.m. Women's Bible Study Christmas Brunch 6 p.m. Family Advent Craft Night 7 p.m. Choir	7	8 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC	9 9 a.m. Shawl Ministry
10 2ND Sunday of Advent 3 – 4 p.m. Pack 367	11 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC 5 – 7 p.m. The Spot	12 6 p.m. Pickleball/CLC	13 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC 5 p.m. Christmas Caroling 7 p.m. Choir	14	15 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC	16
17 3RD Sunday of Advent 8:45 a.m. Churchwide Christmas Breakfast 3 – 4 p.m. Pack 367 4 – 5:30 p.m. Troop 367 6 p.m. O Holy Night Christmas Cantata	18 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC 9 a.m. January 2024 Newsletter Deadline 5 – 7 p.m. The Spot	19 Smith Co. Schools 1/2 Day 6 p.m. Pickleball/CLC	20 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC 6 p.m. Youth Christmas Party Smith Co. Schools Christmas Break	21 6 p.m. Blue Christmas Smith Co. Schools Christmas Break	22 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC Smith Co. Schools Christmas Break	23 Christmas Eve Meals on Wheels
24 Christmas Eve 4 TH Sunday of Advent 10 a.m. Worship Svc Only 6 & 11 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Services	25 CHRISTMAS DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED Smith Co. Schools Christmas Break	26 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 6 p.m. Pickleball/CLC Smith Co. Schools Christmas Break	27 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC Smith Co. Schools Christmas Break	28 Smith Co. Schools Christmas Break	29 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC Smith Co. Schools Christmas Break	30
31 New Year's Eve 10 a.m. Worship Svc Only						