



Birthdays

December 01 Janet Eller
December 01 Sandy Elliott
December 03 Jimmy Pendry
December 21 Jessie Stotler
December 24 Grayson Snow
December 26 Jim Pendry
December 28 William Snow
December 30 Chuck Evans
December 31 Ann Elrod

Anniversaries

December 11 Chris & Beth Miller
December 13 Caleb & Amber Johnson
December 30 Chuck & Ann Evans



The Union Messenger

Union United Methodist Church

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Pastor Share

Do you have a Christmas memory that stands out among others? One of my favorite memories is the year the power went out at my Grandma Lankford's house. Our family's tradition was a big lunch and of course exchanging gifts. One Christmas about twelve or so years ago, we were sitting down to lunch when the power went out like the power always goes out; very quickly and without warning. Luckily, all the food had been prepared and since it was around noon, we didn't need light to eat by. (Honestly, if it had been pitch black dark, we would have figured out how to eat!) But since it was daylight and the food was ready, we had a great lunch. Then we retired to the living room and had a great time opening presents. Somewhere along the line someone looked out the window facing Suncrest Orchard Road and saw the power problem. The power line had broken and was lying in the road. I don't remember if we called and told someone about the dangerous situation or if the power company discovered the downed power line, but very soon after they arrived a Highway Patrol Officer arrived on the scene. The officer was a female officer and someone went outside to talk to her. Maybe they wanted to know how long the power was going to be off, or maybe for some other reason, I really don't know. But if you're at Grandma's house and food is prepared, then you get invited to eat. And that's exactly what happened. We invited the officer to have lunch after she was finished helping the Duke Power workers and I just remember how nice she was and how good it made us all feel. That's the thing about Christmases that aren't perfect. If someone had told us the power was going to be interrupted, we would have changed our plans in some way and might not have gotten to offer

appreciation and love in the form of a home cooked meal. I can't predict the future, but chances are not all of our Christmases this year will be perfect. As a matter of fact, I'd say none of our Christmases are going to be perfect, whatever perfect may mean to us. That's what is so amazing and wonderful and awesome about Jesus; He came to this imperfect world to offer perfect love. Jesus doesn't pressure us to try and be perfect. Jesus knows we are all going to stumble. I personally think Jesus loves Christmas when we celebrate every meal, every present, and every gesture of love with our eyes to heaven. He truly is the Reason for the season. I hope you have an amazing, wonderful, awesome, and imperfect Christmas. I hope your Christmas is filled with laughter and joy and time with those you love. But most of all, I hope the perfect love of Jesus finds you, and restores you, and protects you. Merry Christmas - *Pastor Randy*

Advent Bible Study

Sunday, November 23rd was the first Sunday of our 5 week Advent Bible Study "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus." We were excited to have 15 people join us for the first Sunday! It is not too late if you'd like to join the study. Books are still available at \$15 (*see Pastor Randy to purchase one*).

This is a great way to get better acquainted with your fellow church members as well as preparing our hearts and minds for Christmas. If you'd like to have a cup of coffee and/or a snack before the study, please come a few minutes early so we can start promptly at 10:00. Looking forward to seeing you there!



Saturday, December 6 at 9am

Join us for a great time of Christian Fellowship and some really good breakfast food! Sign-up sheet is in the vestibule for planning purposes.

A Christmas Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We come before You with hearts full of gratitude and joy as we gather in Your presence to celebrate the birth of Your Son, Jesus Christ. This Christmas season, we lift our voices in praise, for You have given us the greatest gift of all—Your love made flesh, Emmanuel, God with us.

Lord, we thank You for the gift of salvation that came through Jesus, for the hope, peace, joy, and love that He brings into our lives. As we reflect on the miracle of His birth, may our hearts be filled with awe and wonder at Your boundless mercy and grace. Help us to remember that Christmas is not just a season, but a reminder of Your eternal love and faithfulness.

Bless this church, Lord, and all who gather here to worship You. May this house of prayer be a beacon of light in our community, shining forth the message of Christ's love to all who enter. Fill this place with Your presence, and may every song sung, every prayer spoken, and every word preached bring glory to Your name.

We pray for our pastor, leaders, and servants in this church. Strengthen them, Lord, as they minister to Your people. Fill them with wisdom, compassion, and a renewed passion for sharing the Gospel. May they be instruments of Your grace, leading others closer to You during this sacred season and beyond.

Father, we lift up those who are hurting this Christmas—the lonely, the grieving, the sick, and the weary. May they find comfort in the promise that Jesus came to bring peace to troubled hearts. Use us, Lord, as Your hands and feet to reach out to those in need, to offer kindness, encouragement, and love to those who feel forgotten.

We also pray for our families and loved ones. May this Christmas be a time of reconciliation, unity, and joy. Let love reign in our homes, and may we always remember that the greatest gift we can give is the love that reflects Your own.

Lord, we pray for the world, for those who do not yet know the true meaning of Christmas. Open hearts to receive the good news of Jesus Christ. Let the message of His birth bring transformation to lives, families, and nations. May peace reign where there is conflict, and may Your love overcome all darkness.

As we celebrate this holy season, help us to keep our focus on Jesus, the Light of the World. Let us not be consumed by the distractions of the season, but instead, may we be filled with a deep and abiding joy that comes from knowing You.

Thank You, Father, for the gift of Your Son. Thank You for the love that never fails, the grace that sustains us, and the hope that we have in Christ. May our hearts overflow with worship and adoration, not just on Christmas Day, but every day of our lives.

We offer this prayer in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and King. Amen



Wednesday, December 24th at 5:00 pm

This will be our third annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service. This service is a rare moment of tranquility in our hectic lives; offering a space for remembrance, introspection, and future aspirations. We hope you will take time from your family gatherings and join us for this very meaningful service!



Time Capsule Update

As you know about 25 years ago, we buried a time capsule, which for various reasons, we have been unable to locate. So, we have decided to plan better for another time capsule to be opened 50 years from now, but this one will not be buried! Pastor Randy is building a wooden box which will be sealed and maintained in our church library (*located next to Pastor Randy’s office*). We will have a plaque made with details of when it is to be opened that will be attached to the box.

That said, now we need to begin the process of collecting our items for the box. Time Capsule items should help commemorate the church’s history and values for future generations. Our Ministry Team will be responsible for collecting and including a number of items such as: the 225th banner which we’ve all been signing since our anniversary celebrations, bulletins, newsletters church directory, and other pertinent church documents.

We’d like for everyone to include at least one item. These could include: a hand written letter or message to the future, a family picture (*please limit the size to a 5x7 and place inside a zip lock to preserve over time*), money (*may not exist in the future/ could use empty pill bottles for coins, zip locks for bills*). We’ll collect items in a tub in the church library. Exact date and time for sealing the time capsule will be announced towards the end of December, possibly as a New Year’s Eve gathering!



Wreaths for Our Veterans' Graves

American Legion Riders Post 31 of North Wilkesboro sponsors Wreaths for Veterans Graves each year here in Wilkes County. Their mission is to *“Remember the fallen, Honor those who serve, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom.”* This year Union UMC chose to participate by purchasing a wreath to place on the grave of each veteran buried in our cemetery to honor and remember our deceased veterans.

We have purchased 43 wreaths at a cost of \$5 per wreath which will be placed on each of the graves listed on page 5 on Sunday, December 14th, immediately after worship service. If you would like to stay and watch, or help as the wreaths are placed on the graves. The wreaths are a 20” Fraser Fir with a red bow.

This list was compiled based on the information we had available in our cemetery records, researching online and discussions with church members. If anyone has information concerning a family member that was a veteran that is not included on our list, please know this was not our intention. If you will, please reach out to Pastor Randy or Sissie Church with that information so we can update our records to ensure that we include them in the future!



Honoring and Remembering

Our Veterans

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME
Joe R.	Bumgarner	Clarence	Miller
Rex	Call	Isaac O.	Miller
William Grady (Pete)	Canter	Isaac William, Sr	Miller
Silas C.	Church	William W.	Miller
Alfred Allen	Crysel	William David	Miller
Charles P.	Crysel	George B.	Mitchell
J. P., Jr.	Crysel	Sargt. James P.	Mitchell
James Ezel	Crysel	James Glenn	Norris
John W.	Crysel	Dale	Osborne
Richard	Crysel	Paul	Owens
Sgt. James W.	Crysel	W. Howard	Owens
Joe	Eller	Millard (Martie)	Palmer
Woodrow	Elliott	James H.	Pennell
Claude A.	Evans	Clyde	Shumaker
Gurney	Faw	Clate	Snider
Philip	Forester	Stanley S.	Staley
C. W. Frank, Sr.	Gambill	William G.	Staley
Floyd	Hincher	D. E. (Tommy), Jr.	Turner
Jake	Jones	Charlie Franklin	Wadkins
William Stamey Luck, Jr.	Luck	Boyce	Wiles
Fred C.	McLean	Dock F.	Wood
Bob	McNeill		