

**First Methodist Church of Clinton**

208 Sampson St  
Clinton, NC 28328  
Telephone: (910)592-2035  
Church Email: [info@fmcnc.org](mailto:info@fmcnc.org)  
Website: [www.fmcnc.org](http://www.fmcnc.org)

**The Cornerstone**  
1815 - 2025...  
Ephesians 2:20



December  
2025

**Pastor’s Corner**

Is there room in your heart? This line is repeated in the 2017 song *Make Room* by Casting Crowns. The song appeared on their Christmas album that year and calls us to reflect inwardly about the space that we are making available for God to write His story. The song is a reflection on the innkeeper from the birth story of Jesus. Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem for the census and find that there is no room in the inn. The innkeeper doesn’t send them on their way; he offers them another place. He offers them a stable.

Mark Hall of Casting Crowns writes, “I remember thinking that the innkeeper was the villain. He was a bad guy and should’ve been wearing a black hat because he was the guy who shut down Jesus. Jesus came to Earth to save the whole world, and this guy puts Him in a barn. That makes all of us feel better about ourselves because we’re not the innkeeper. We make ourselves believe we’d never turn away God if He came to Earth.”

Hall would share how, as he grew in his faith, he began to realize the innkeeper wasn’t a bad guy; he was just a busy guy. He was a guy trying to get through a busier-than-expected week. A pastor once shared with Hall, “The innkeeper gave Him a place. He just didn’t give Him the place.”

How often do we give Jesus a place in our lives, but we don’t give Him a place in our hearts?

Our series this Advent is all about making room. Advent is a busy season with all of the extra things—the hustle and bustle, the programs, the gatherings—and the list goes on and on. The most wonderful time of the year can become stressful, chaotic, and far from the experience of hope, love, joy, and peace that Christmas is meant to bring. How often do we become the innkeeper and give Jesus a place that is not our heart?

This Advent, I want to invite you to consider whether there is room in your heart for God to write His story. You are the innkeeper of your heart. What are you telling God about your time, your availability, your capacity to truly experience the hope, love, joy, and peace of Christ this season?

In Christ,  
Rev. Matt Seals  
[pastor@fmcnc.org](mailto:pastor@fmcnc.org)



**Dates to Remember**

**Blue Christmas**  
**December 2<sup>nd</sup> : 6:00**

**Angel Tree Return**  
**December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**A Night in Bethlehem**  
**December 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**6:00 - 8:30 PM**

**Inbetween-ers**  
**Christmas Party**  
**December 6<sup>th</sup> : 5 PM**  
**RSVP by 12/3**

**Methodist Women’s**  
**Christmas Dinner**  
**December 8<sup>th</sup> : 6 PM**

**Office Closed**  
**December 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>**  
**January 1<sup>st</sup>**

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## Music Corner- [music@fmcnc.org](mailto:music@fmcnc.org) Dan Holland, Cameron and Marquita Someliana- Lauer



Dear Church Family,

Throughout the four Sundays of Advent, the choir is singing the carol “Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne and Thy Kingly Home” (OGRP No. 202) as the Call to Prayer. This beautiful Advent/Christmas hymn contrasts the lack of room for Jesus in Bethlehem with the invitation for Him to come and dwell in the singer’s heart, because it is there that there is room for Him.

The Sing! hymnal has this to say about the origin of this piece:

“This beautiful devotional hymn was written by Emily Elliot, niece of Charlotte Elliot (who wrote ‘Just as I Am’). Originally written for children to explain Christmas, the irregular tune builds throughout and then has one of the most beautiful choruses, which, like ‘Just as I Am,’ asks each of us to commit all that we are in return to the Lord Jesus. ‘O Come to My Heart, Lord Jesus—there is room in my heart for Thee!’”

During this busiest of seasons, we hope you will “make room” to experience, enjoy, and worship through the music of Advent and Christmas. Here are a few of the ways you can do just that this month:

- There will be live music from 6–8:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 4th, during the nativity display walk-through.
- The children will sing in worship on December 7th.
- The dulcimer ensemble will play for the “Hanging of the Greens” **service at Hopewell Methodist Church on Sunday, December 7th, at 6 p.m.**
- The kids and youth are also hard at work on their Christmas musical! This will be Wednesday, December 10th.
- The Dulcimer Ensemble will play in worship on Sunday, December 14th.
- The Chancel Choir and Handbells will provide special music on Sunday, December 21st, during morning worship.

In Christ,

Marquita Someliana-Lauer, Organist, etc.

(910) 548-2719

[organist@fmcnc.org](mailto:organist@fmcnc.org)

*Sing Praise to God!*

A concert featuring the favorite anthems of  
**Music Director, Dan Holland.**

Presented in celebration of his 40 years of music  
ministry at First Methodist Church.

Sunday, March 22, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.  
*Reception to follow*

**First Methodist Church**  
**208 Sampson St. Clinton, NC 28328**

Please contact us by January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, if you are interested  
in singing with the choir for this wonderful event.  
**[music@fmcnc.org](mailto:music@fmcnc.org) or (910) 548-2719**



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## Children's Corner- [children@fmcnc.org](mailto:children@fmcnc.org)

### Abby Tomell, Children's Minister



“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.” Luke 2:14

It is hard to believe December is already here! The Christmas season has arrived, a time filled with joy, excitement, and celebration as we remember the birth of our Savior. The kids have been learning, growing, and getting ready for some fun and meaningful events this month.

This past month, we've been talking a lot with the kids about who God says we are, and how the church is holy ground. Our goal is for every child to understand that when we come together at church, it's a special place where we worship, learn about God, and show respect for Him and one another. We're so proud of how our children are growing in their understanding and love for God's house.

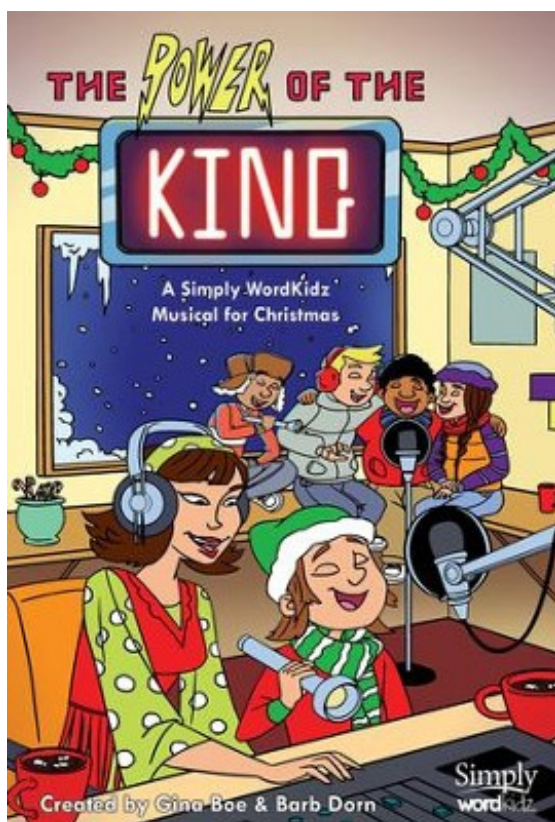
Our Christmas play is almost here! The kids have been practicing hard, learning songs and lines to share the story of Jesus' birth. Please keep helping your children review their parts at home—every bit of practice helps. Invite your family and friends on Dec. 10th to this special night as we celebrate the true reason for the season!

Who is ready for the downtown Christmas Parade again?? We sure are! We will continue with our Charlie Brown Christmas theme. Kids are welcome to dress up in their favorite Christmas colors—anything to stay warm! This is always a fun way to share the joy with our community and remind everyone of God's love during the holiday season.

We wrapped up WEF with a combined youth and children's skating event. We enjoyed some fellowship, family, food, and a little faith on wheels!

As we move into the new year, we are excited to continue growing together. Stay tuned for new lessons, new adventures, and more ways that we can serve God together. We want to give our church family a quick heads-up about an exciting change coming next year. In 2026, our Children's Ministry volunteer program will be shifting to a new structure designed to better support our staff and volunteers. More details will be shared in the coming months.

Merry Christmas



## CHILDREN AND YOUTH CHRISTMAS PROGRAM DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> 6:00 PM

The staff of a 1970s-era radio station must come up with a live Christmas Eve broadcast when an impending blizzard knocks out the electricity, leaving them with limited broadcast capabilities and only a backup generator for power. Fortunately, a busload of choir members has taken refuge at the radio station. As a result, a non-believing disc jockey discovers faith in Jesus and the real meaning of Christmas during their live production.

**Dinner to follow:**  
Sandwiches, Mac-N-Cheese, and Fruit.

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# Youth Corner- youth@fmcnc.org

## Rev. Joel Wise, Associate Pastor- Youth



“Christmas comes but once a year. Now it’s here, now it’s here. Bringing lots of joy and cheer. Fa La La La La!”  
—Professor Grampy

It’s the busiest time of the year. We have gifts to buy, decorations to put up, parties to host, family to visit, and church celebrations of which to be a part. The youth will celebrate their Christmas with their progressive **Christmas dinner on December 14 at 5 p.m.** If your teen would like to join us, please email youth@fmcnc.org for more information. The youth are also helping with the children’s Christmas production of Power of the King. Some will be performing the music while others will be helping with stage cues, lighting, and sound. There will be no Sunday night youth after December 14th. We will resume Sunday night youth on January 11, 2026.

Christmas time will be a difficult time for some members of our church family. This will be Jessie’s and my first Christmas without her dad and without my grandmother. Please keep our family in prayer during this holiday season. It will not be an easy one, but our God is good and will help us endure. As the year comes to a close, I reflect on the year past and how blessed Jessie and I have been to be a part of such a loving community and a loving church. We cannot begin to thank you enough for the care and love that you have continually given our family. It is a true testament to who you are in Jesus Christ.

We hope that God blesses you and your family this Christmas season, and we will see you in the new year.

With much love,  
Pastor Joel



Check out this short video



Just scan with your phone camera

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## Missions Corner



**FMC  
MISSIONS**

**AID AND RELIEF LOCAL AND ABROAD**



**CHRISTMAS CHEER ANGELS AVAILABLE  
AT BACK OF THE SANCTUARY.  
RETURN BY DEC. 3, UNWRAPPED**

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED  
WITH OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD.  
OUR CHURCH PREPARED 75  
SHOEBOXES THIS YEAR!**



**NEXT MISSIONS TEAM MEETING:  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026  
6:30 PM**

### **The Methodist Women Need Your Help!**

We have partnered with the Sampson Correctional Community Resource Council again this season to provide **cake donations** in support of the annual Christmas Dinner for the offenders at the Sampson Correctional Institution, which will be held on December 10th.

*Cake donations may be  
dropped off at our church by  
2:00 PM on December 9th.*

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**Meals on Wheels**

**December 1st**

Elsie Taylor

**December 12th**

Steve Williams

**December 29th**

Holly McMillen

**Birthday Cake Bunch**

Debbie Jones, Selma  
Turlington, Mary Margaret  
Hobbs

First Baptist Church 900  
Food Pantry Collection  
**Canned Corn**

**SERVE  
LIKE  
JESUS**

**Worship Corner**

**Altar Guild:** Mary Nell Darden & Lori Barwick

**Greeters:** NOW Team

**Flowers:** Reminder, Sanctuary flower  
arrangements are \$55 for one slot or \$110 for both.  
Please ensure payments are made before your date.

**December Flower Calendar**

7<sup>th</sup>- Mary Nell Darden, **One slot open**  
14<sup>th</sup> - Rex & Ellen Moody  
21<sup>st</sup>- Dan & Ruth Holland  
28<sup>th</sup> - Rachel Grantham

**2026 Flower Calendar  
Sign-UP**



**NOW Corner**

NOW has continued with Backpack Buddies, Mary and Martha's, Wednesday night dinners, and supporting several activities in our church and community. If you are willing to volunteer for any upcoming activities or meals, please let Jeff know. If you have any suggestions on how Nurture Outreach Witness can serve members in our church or community, please let Pastor Joel or Jeff know. Thank you for supporting our team in this ministry.

Mark your calendars now and make plans to help with our Christmas Cookie Drive! This event is in partnership with First Baptist Church. **On December 15th at 11:00 AM**, you can bring cookie dough to the fellowship hall to bake and pack for our homebound members. Furthermore, cookies can also be dropped off at the church or at FBC.





# What's happening

## Blue Christmas Service

All are welcome to join this reflective worship service for those who are grieving.

December  
Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 pm  
2025

**Graves Memorial**  
**Presbyterian Church Sanctuary**  
201 Fayetteville Street  
Clinton, NC 28328

In conjunction with and deep gratitude for  
*Clinton Community, Epworth Methodist, First Baptist, First Baptist of Clinton, First Methodist, Grace Methodist, Grove Park Baptist, Lisbon Street Baptist, Rowan Baptist, and St. Paul's Episcopal churches, among others.*

ANNUAL INBETWEEN-ERS

## Christmas Party

**DECEMBER 6 | 5PM**

Moore's Aerial Applicators Hangar  
at the Sampson County Airport,  
164 Sampson Airport Rd. Clinton

SHOW STARTS PROMPTLY AT 5:30!  
Magician- Bryan Sanders

Please bring a **small appetizer** to share  
& **any special drinks** you'd like.  
(SignUpGenius will show you how many attendees)

*Waters, sodas, & paper goods provided.*

Casual, festive attire!

**\$45 per person - Pay online under Inbetween-ers**  
This is an adults only event.

RSVP by 12/3 at [SignUpGenius link provided](#)



## A Night in Bethlehem

Nativity Display + Live Music

December 4th

6:00-8:30 pm



## Baptism and Membership Sunday

**December 14th**  
**11:00 Service**

If you are ready to make a public profession of your faith and be baptized, become a member of First Methodist or would like to renew your baptismal covenant and remember your baptism.

Contact the church office to connect with Pastor Matt  
[info@fmcnc.org](mailto:info@fmcnc.org) 910-592-2035

## JOIN US IN WORSHIP THIS ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SEASON

November 30th – January 4th

10:00 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Combined Worship

**December 7th: 11:00 AM**

Children's Singing Performance

**December 10th: 6:00 PM**

Children & Youth Christmas Program

**December 21st:**

8:30 AM Church-Wide Breakfast

11:00 AM Choir Christmas Music and Handbells

**December 24th: 6:00 & 11:00 p.m.**

Christmas Eve Worship  
Candlelight & Communion



# Prayer Corner

Dr. Mac Herring, Ann Herring, Jimmie Hall, Marvin Mitchell, Frances Pearson, Wayne Boyette, Ethan Youngblood, Mary Margaret Hobbs, Homer Morris, Debra Morris, Jane Waters, Pam Griffin, Wayne Tew, Louetta Carr, Pat Warrick, Emery Walker, JoAnn Westbrook, Janet Johnson, Wes Keen, Zachery Johnson, Steve Baker, Mike & Myra Humphrey, Glenn Brewer, Bryson Capps, Ed Owen, Merry Wicke, Greg Moore, Jimmy Smith, Donald & Carolyn Wrench, Wayne Reynolds, Angie Hall, Danny Dyson, Violet White

**Those who are homebound:** Ruth Godwin, Barbara Carr

**Those who are in long-term care:** Loraine Butler, Margaret Oates, Anthony Balkcum, Pat Green, Mary Humphrey, Frances Pearson, Gerry Krivoniak

**Intercessory Prayer Group: Mondays at 10:00 am**

Selfish  
less

Less of Me.  
More Like Jesus

Series begins January 4th

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH  
WWW.FMCNC.ORG CLINTON, NC

## OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY - THURSDAY  
08:00 - 5:00

LUNCH BREAK - CLOSED  
12:00 - 1:00

{Lunch may vary slightly depending on daily schedule}

FRIDAY - CLOSED

If you need to drop something off, you are welcome to place it in the mailbox located outside the church doors at any time. The mailbox is checked daily.

If no one answers the door or phone, please know we may be away from the desk, out for a late lunch or in a meeting.

You may leave a voicemail at (910) 592-2035 or email [info@fmcnc.org](mailto:info@fmcnc.org) and we will respond as soon as possible.

Thank you for your understanding!

God Bless,  
Administrative Staff

## Birthdays

- 1st – Helen Kaleel
- 1st – Carolyn Waters
- 2nd – Lillie Turlington
- 3rd – Laura Blake King
- 3rd – Susan Williams
- 6th – Susan Eaves
- 8th – Hudson Griffin
- 8th – Michael Dale Williams
- 10th – Greg Griffin
- 10th – Sheila Steed
- 11th – Gerry Krivoniak
- 11th – Greg Thornton
- 11th – Beth Wells
- 12th – John Lowe
- 13th – Paula Crumpler
- 15th – Rachel Best
- 15th – Jenna King
- 15th – Wil Pearson
- 16th – Marvin Mitchell
- 18th – Lindy Parker
- 20th – Ted Best
- 21st – Dianne Cox
- 21st – Mary Humphrey
- 21st – Cody Stanley
- 24th – Nancy Carr
- 24th – Wayne Moore
- 24th – Logan Wheeler
- 27th – Jane Spell
- 29th – Eva Barlowe
- 29th – Hannah Baxter

## Anniversaries

- 8th – Aaron & Emily Bullard
- 11th – Vince & Jodie Nelson
- 13th – Blake & Jenna King
- 13th – Nick & Brittany Serafini
- 18th – Patrick & Dottie O’Quinn
- 20th – Johnny & Rose Vann

2025

December

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 10:00 Intercessory Prayer 11:00 Staff Meeting	2 9:00 Chat with M@ 6:00 Blue Christmas Service @ Graves Memorial	3 7:00 Chancel Choir <b>Angel Tree Return</b>	4 5:30 Christmas in the City 6:00 - 8:30 A Night in Bethlehem Nativity Display	5	6 10:00 - 3:00 Clinton Downtown Sweet Stroll 5:00 Inbetween-ers Christmas Party
7 9:30 Fellowship 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Combined Worship 4:30 SALT Trip 5:00 Youth 6:00 Dulcimers-@ Hopewell	8 10:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:00 Methodist Women Christmas Dinner	9 9:00 Chat with M@ <b>Cake Drop-Off by 2:00 (Fellowship Hall)</b>	10 6:00 Children's Christmas Program & Dinner 7:00 Chancel Choir	11 6:30 Skill Creations Worship Night	12	13 10:00 Clinton Christmas Parade
14 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Combined Worship <b>Baptism &amp; Membership Sunday</b> 5:00 Youth Christmas Dinner	15 10:00 Intercessory Prayer 11:00 Cookie Baking	16 <b>8:00 - 12:00 Cookie Drop-Off (Fellowship Hall)</b> 9:00 Chat with M@ 5:00 Sanctuary In Use (Piano Recital)	17 7:00 Chancel Choir <b>Methodist Women Deliver Cookies</b>	18 <b>Birthday Cakes</b>	19	20
21 8:30 Churchwide Breakfast 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Combined Worship	22 <i>No Intercessory Prayer</i>	23 <i>No Chat with M@</i>	24 6:00 & 11:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship  <b>FMC Office Closed</b>	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i>  <b>FMC Office Closed</b>	26	27
28 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Combined Worship	29 <i>No Intercessory Prayer</i>	30 <i>No Chat with M@</i>	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>  <b>FMC Office Closed</b>	 <p>During the busiest season of the year, please remember how meaningful these four little words can be — to a loved one or even a stranger...</p> <p><i>How can I help?</i></p>		
<b>Notes:</b>      				<b>SALT Trip</b> <b>Schedule for the Day:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depart FMC: 2:45 PM</li><li>• Arrive at Snyder Memorial: 3:30 PM</li><li>• Singing Christmas Tree Performance: 4:30–6:00 PM</li><li>• Dinner at Outback: 6:30–7:45 PM</li><li>• Return to FMC: ~8:30 PM</li></ul> If you have any other questions or would like to collect your tickets, you may contact <b>Mike Eaves</b> at 919-801-1980 or <b>Lesa Moore</b> at 910-990-6215.		