

SUNRISE CHURCH | JANUARY 2026

The Beacon



Embrace God This Year

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will endure forever." -Isaiah 40:8

... they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." (Matthew 1:23)

On Christmas Eve, the meditation focused on the symbolism of the Christ Candle. It is the candle of representing God's love for us. The deep meaning of the birth of Christ is contained in the name, *Emmanuel (God is with us)*. It is a celebration of *presence*, of sharing our lives with God and one another. The Christmas season that actually concludes on January 6th (Epiphany) is all about getting together with family and friends.

In an essay titled, *Why Jesus Loved Friendship*, Peter Wehner goes to the heart of the Christmas Story and the title for Jesus, the Emmanuel (God is with us). Over the centuries, the church has described this reality in theological terms, such as the Incarnation. Our creeds have affirmed the Great Mystery of the Incarnation as Jesus being *fully human, fully divine*. Wehner takes this mystery to the relationship side of Jesus.

The Gospel According to John makes it clear that Jesus does not consider his disciples to be in a servant/master relationship with him, but rather as his friends.

³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34, 35)

¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. (John 15:15)

Friendship is based on a mutuality of love. On sharing life's joys and sorrows. Jesus leads all of us (his present-day disciples) into this rich experience of friendship.

Nurturing relationships require attention and time. I am heartened by the growing realization among people of the danger that our digital lives present in interfering with quality relationships. Putting down our phones and making eye contact with the people in the room with us is so incredibly important.

Peter Wehner closed his essay with this inspiring vision of relationships, and what they have meant to him.

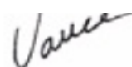
... men and women whose lives have been touched and transformed by grace and love of God. I know such people. These people have shared in the joys of my life and helped sustain me through times of grief and loss. They have loved me, as Jesus loved them. They are friends of Jesus; they are also friends of mine. And that has made all the difference.

As I think of these connections, the hymn, *Blest Be The Tie That Binds* comes to mind. Two of its verses describe beautifully the love and friendship Jesus showed his disciples and has encouraged all of us to share with one another.

*Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds
is like to that above.*

*We share each other's woes,
our mutual burdens bear;
and often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear. Amen!*

In God's grace,



Sunrise Columbarium & Memorial Garden



New Year's is a time when we make "resolutions" to complete plans and get things done. Few people complete plans ahead of time for choosing the final resting place for themselves and their loved ones. This may be the time for your family to make a plan. It is especially important if a loved one has passed away and a permanent place of rest has not been determined. Pre-planning can ease the burden for loved ones and guarantee the opportunity to choose your final resting place. Also, there are times when someone dies without a plan. Vance and the Columbarium Committee are always available to begin these difficult but important conversations and to help you make a plan. ~ Ida Havelka

Information is also available on the church website at www.oursunrise.org under Resources, at the church office, or by contacting Ida Havelka, Columbarium Committee Chair, at ihavelka@comcast.net, 843-412-1884.

Wishing you and your loved ones the very best for the new year.



The Christmas Season at Sunrise.
Thank you to everyone who helped make it a success!



Flower Dedications

The 2026 Flower Dedication Calendar is posted in the Narthex. If you would like, please take this opportunity to volunteer to provide flowers in the Sanctuary dedicated *in honor of* or *in memory of* loved ones. You may also contact the church office at 843.883.3888 or hello@oursunrise.org with your dedications.

New Member Class

A New Member Class led by Lauren Nelson is scheduled for January 11th. Participants will be introduced to the congregation at the 10:00 a.m. Worship Service. If you are interested in learning more about Sunrise or interested in joining, please email Hannah in the Church Office (hello@oursunrise.org).

Sunrise International Missions in 2026

The Anglican Diocese of Ayod in South Sudan and Bishop Thomas Tut are working to make a difference for the Gospel through the funding of much needed teachers. \$100 covers the cost of a teacher's salary for one month. Sunrise has answered the call and will be donating \$100 each month, which will cover the salary of one teacher.

Sunrise received this letter from Bishop Thomas Tut in response to our donation commitment:

Our hearts are full of gratitude and praises to God for your extraordinary generosity. Your commitment and assurance to support a teacher is a profound blessing and a significant milestone in our campaign to furthering the spread of the Gospel through education.

With this gift, we will be able to sponsor a full time regular teacher who will be providing children not only with quality academic education but also with solid, Christ-centred instructions. This school will be a place where young minds will be disciplined, leaders will be raised, and the light of the Gospel will shine brightly now and for generations to come.

Thank you so much and may God richly reward your faithfulness!

Bishop Thomas Tut Gany
The Episcopal Diocese of Ayod

**Thank you for your generous contribution to
the Remembrance Garden...**

- In loving memory of Linda McCrary Hawkins given by Gary Hawkins



January at Sunrise

Growing Faith's next meeting will be on January 18th at 9 am in the Middle School Youth Group room. Any older elementary & middle school students (4th - 8th grade) are invited to join us!

The Adult Sunday School class will continue with its Bible study that connects the many familiar stories and people of the Bible. The class meets weekly in the library at 9:00 a.m. There is a video conference option via google meet. ~ Vance

Middle School Youth Group (6th-8th grade) meets Sundays at 10:30 am and will also meet January 18th and 25th from 4:30 - 6:30 pm at Sunrise Church. This month's meetings will include dinner, games, and a group devotional. If you have any questions, please reach out to Breezy at breezy@oursunrise.org or (843) 860-9581.

On Friday evenings at Sunrise Church college-age young people are gathering at 7:00 p.m. for Bible study, a meal, and then finishing the evening with a game like Uno. This youth group is a continuation of our Senior High group from last year. It's under the leadership of Harrison & Ritchie.

The Women's Morning Bible Study will meet on January 13th at 10 am in the library. This Bible study connects the many familiar stories and people of the Bible. New members are always welcome. ~ Vance

The Women's Evening Bible Study will meet January 20th at 5:30 pm using the book *Esther: Daring Faith for Such a Time as This*. In this 7-session study, author Kelly Minter invites you into the daring faith modeled by Esther and her cousin Mordecai—a faith developed over time, rooted in the goodness of God, lived out through extraordinary circumstances, and used to change the world. New members are always welcome. ~ Caroline

Cents-Ability is collected the 2nd Sunday of each month. Thanks to you, donations have been made to Neighbors Together, East Cooper Meals on Wheels, and East Cooper Community Outreach. Please continue to give at least two cents per person per meal in the bowl in the Narthex. This simple act is an expression of thanksgiving for what we have received.

Start off your Tuesdays with the **Jerry Dillon Men's Prayer Breakfast** at 8:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. Enjoy great food, fellowship, and a devotion.

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 8:45am - Choir Practice 9am - Adult Sunday School 9am - Fellowship (Fellowship Hall) 10am - Family Service 10am - Worship Service 10:40am - Middle School Youth 4:30pm - Middle School Youth	29	30	31 10am - AA Meeting	1 New Year's Day	2 7pm - College Youth Group	3
4 Communion & Family Service 8:45am - Choir Practice 9am - Adult Sunday School 9am - Fellowship (Fellowship Hall) 10am - Family Service 10am - Worship Service 10:40am - Middle School Youth	5 2:45pm - Music Lessons (Choir) 5:30pm - Agape Do Karate	6 8am - Men's Breakfast	7 10am - AA Meeting 6:30pm - Choir Practice	8 5:30pm - Agape Do Karate	9 10:30am - Bridge - Fellowship Hall 7pm - College Youth Group	10
11 Cents-Ability New Member Class 8:45am - Choir Practice 9am - Adult Sunday School 9am - Fellowship (Fellowship Hall) 10am - Family Service 10am - Worship Service	12 2:45pm - Music Lessons (Choir) 5:30pm - Agape Do Karate	13 8am - Men's Breakfast 10am - Women's Morning Bible	14 10am - AA Meeting 6:30pm - Choir Practice	15 5:30pm - Agape Do Karate 6pm - Battery Gadsden - Sanctuary	16 10:30am - Bridge - Fellowship Hall 7pm - College Youth Group	17
18 8:45am - Choir Practice 9am - Adult Sunday School 9am - Fellowship (Fellowship Hall) 9am - Growing Faith - Family 10am - Family Service 10am - Worship Service 10:40am - Middle School Youth 4:30pm - Middle School Youth	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2:45pm - Music Lessons (Choir) 5:30pm - Agape Do Karate	20 8am - Men's Breakfast 5:30pm - Women's Evening Bible	21 10am - AA Meeting 6:30pm - Choir Practice	22 5:30pm - Agape Do Karate	23 10:30am - Bridge - Fellowship Hall 7pm - College Youth Group	24
25 8:45am - Choir Practice 9am - Adult Sunday School 9am - Fellowship (Fellowship Hall) 10am - Family Service 10am - Worship Service 10:40am - Middle School Youth 4:30pm - Middle School Youth	26 2:45pm - Music Lessons (Choir) 5:30pm - Agape Do Karate 6:45pm - Seaside Singers	27 8am - Men's Breakfast	28 10am - AA Meeting 6:30pm - Choir Practice	29 5:30pm - Agape Do Karate	30 10:30am - Bridge - Fellowship Hall 7pm - College Youth Group	31

January Birthdays

1 Danielle Feerst

1 Jeff Panitt

1 Lucy Williams

1 Lia McKee

2 Adlai Allard

3 John Clarke

3 Victoria Kern

5 Dave Shrader

6 Lauren Nelson

7 Lamar Graves

9 Carlin Timmons

10 Ralph Byers

11 Charles Guss

11 Brian Fehon

12 Campbell Long

13 Brendan Jeffers

17 Dan Floyd

17 Garth Lynch

18 Leslie Belicka

18 Hallie Tinker

19 Madge Walther

19 Ross Wilson

19 Dolores Russell

22 Diane Schmidt

24 Gene McClary

25 Reid Jeffers

27 Vance Polley

28 Georgia Stewart

28 Amy Major

29 Rusty Reaser

29 Ray Dickinson

30 Julie Milly

30 John Hardwick

Church Office Hours:

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Phone: (843) 883-3888

www.oursunrise.org

Sunrise Staff

Matthew Parker, M.M

Director of Music Ministries
mthwprkr5617@icloud.com

Hannah Webster, MBA

Church Administrator
hannah@oursunrise.org

The Rev. Dr. Vance E. Polley, D. Min.

Pastor
VancePolley@me.com

Breezy Baxley

Middle School Youth Leader
breezy@oursunrise.org

Michele Smith

Stephen Ministry Leader
mlsmith755@gmail.com



Sunrise Presbyterian Church
3222 Middle Street
PO Box 517
Sullivan's Island, SC 29482