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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The Good News is published quarterly.

The images included in this issue of various quilt pieces were designed by A Sanctified Art, Advent 2024. This includes Creative Director, Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity, Founding Creative Partner, Hannah Garrity, and guest artist, Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda.

FROM THE PASTOR



When I was a teenager, I went to a quilt auction held in an Amish community in Southern Indiana. There were busloads of people there. And a hardy lunchtime buffet of homemade noodles, potato salad, sausages and beautiful pies. (Did I mention it was summer and HOT and HUMID?)

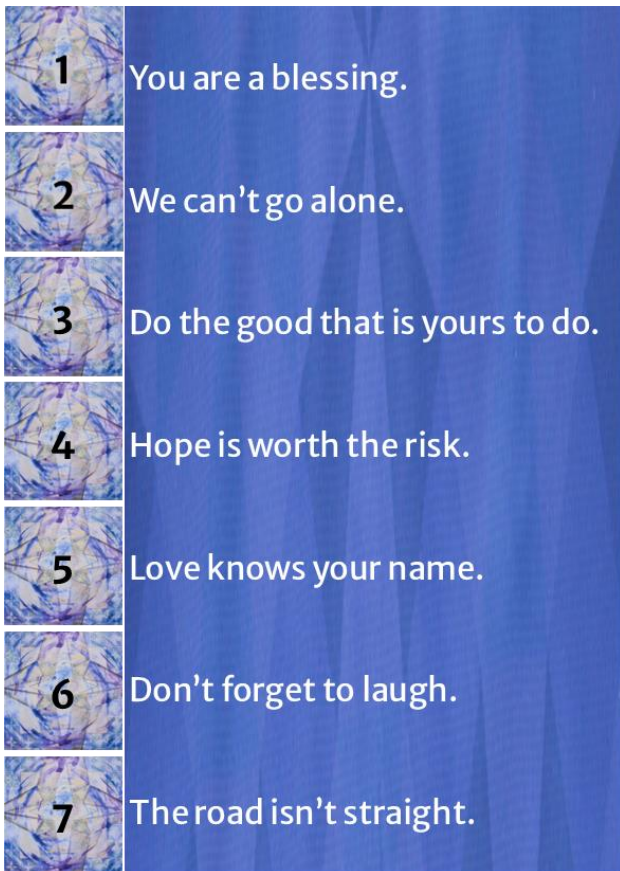
This quilt auction was held annually, and proceeds supported the community's healthcare fund. You see, rather than insurance, this community had a common pool of funds that were used to pay healthcare costs for community members. I was at the auction with my brother-in-law, an anesthesiologist who had cared for a number of people in the community over the years.

We returned to my sister's house from that auction with SO MANY QUILTS. (I should mention that my sister had seven kids, and a 10-bedroom house – and every room needed at least one quilt). They were all beautiful, all hand quilted. When my son was born, he was gifted a baby quilt made by the same community – tumbling blocks in pink and blue.

In retrospect, I love that it was a quilt auction that wrapped this community in a kind of safety and well-being. Quilts have that power.

In my childhood, I remember burrowing under heavy quilts on cold Midwestern winter nights, guarding myself against the chill of the uninsulated plaster wall in my bedroom. Often my pastor nap involves a recliner and a quilt on Sunday afternoon. When I am sick, I want to bury myself in quilts.

During the season of Advent and Christmas, we will be reaching for the comfort of timeworn truths. As the story of Mary and Joseph and shepherds and angels unfolds in a time of chaos, we will grab hold of seven different parts of the story that can comfort us and help us find solid ground in our own chaotic world. In each part, we'll find a truth:



Piece by piece, we'll patch together our own comforting quilt as the days grow shorter, the nights longer, and the air colder.

Once again this year, there are resources available to help you on the journey through the season (refer to next block). I know the calendar gets full quickly, but I encourage you to take a moment every day during Advent to read scripture, take in a piece of art, listen to a song from the series, or snap a photo that reminds you of our theme. Even a small moment in time each day centers us in the big story of God in a busy season.

Take-home materials will be available to you beginning November 17, and email devotions will begin arriving the week of November 25.

I hope that you will take a moment now, before the season heats up, to make a commitment to yourself to the work of staying connected to God as we await the birth of God with us in this holy season.

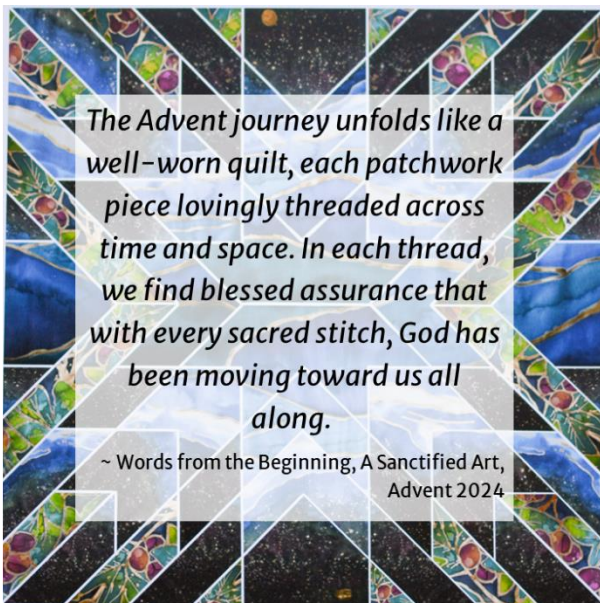
Resources Available for You

- A devotional booklet that includes readings, poetry, music and art – enough to guide your practices daily or weekly.

- A Word-a-Day Advent Calendar – individually or as a family, ponder a specific word each day and try to capture an image that connects you to that word. Download below or copies will be available in the Narthex.
- An Advent Calendar – create your own colorful quilt block one bit at a time. Download below or copies will be available in the Narthex.
- A weekly children’s bulletin – but I’d remind you that “child” is broadly defined.
- A weekly email devotional message.

Grace & Peace,

Sara Nowell



OUR GIFT MATTERS

Have you noticed that we are (all of us) Growing in Faith Together? What a GIFT!

We are growing in numbers, but perhaps most importantly, we are growing in relationship to God and to one another. At every age, there are signs of life and fruitfulness alongside acts of justice and compassion. We (the whole church) love hearing about your God sightings, your

epiphanies and the people whose lives you are touching because you are sharing your faith. We love to know what matters to you and how we can pray with you. We love sharing life and we are growing to do that in new and different ways.

As members of the church – the expression of Christ’ body in the world – we commit to supporting that body with our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. That means that we will pray, show up, share our time, talent and treasure, participate actively in the work of the church, and tell others about how God is working in our lives. The church can only be Christ’s hands and feet when we lean into these commitments.



Since our stewardship campaign wrapped up its “public phase,” we have received 55 estimates of giving totaling about \$350,000. In order to plan our work for the coming year, we need many more folks to share an estimate of giving. These estimates help us to plan our important work. In the year to come, we are looking forward to sending youth to work camp, worshipping with amazing music, serving our neighbors in need and hopefully

keeping our elevator running, our building secured and the heat on!

Please share your estimate of giving (or pledge) to the church for 2025.

Thanks for all you are doing to grow in faith right now.

ADVENT SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP

(next page)



YOU ARE A BLESSING

Sunday, December 1 at 10am: First Sunday of Advent (Isaiah 43:1-7)



WE CAN'T GO ALONE

Sunday, December 8 at 10am: Second Sunday of Advent (Ruth 1; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)



DO THE GOOD THAT IS YOURS TO DO

Sunday, December 15 at 10am: Third Sunday of Advent (Luke 3:7-16)



HOPE IS WORTH THE RISK

Sunday, December 22 at 10am: Fourth Sunday of Advent (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:46-55)

AND Longest Night at 7:30pm: This service will be streamed live.



LOVE KNOWS YOUR NAME

Tuesday, December 24: Christmas Eve (Luke 2:1-20; Isaiah 9:6)

4pm: Family worship service

8pm: Music prelude begins at 7:30pm; this service will be streamed live

and 10:30pm: Worship will offer communion



DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH

Sunday, December 29 at 10am: First Sunday after Christmas (Luke 2:10; Matthew 2:10; Isaiah 9:2-3)



THE ROAD ISN'T STRAIGHT

Sunday, January 5 at 10am: Epiphany (Matthew 2:1-12; Isaiah 43:16-21)

QUARTERS FOR KIDS

For the past eight years, Faith's children and youth have led the congregation in collecting quarters during the Advent season. What a success it has been! Over 18,000 quarters have gone to the UMC-affiliated Board of Child Care to buy their kids clothing, food, presents, and celebrations for significant life moments throughout the year.

This year, our campaign will be slightly different. The children and youth will be leading the congregation again, but our collected quarters will go to The Heifer Project to help provide families with flocks of young chickens and ducks for eggs, hives of honeybees that can double the yield of fruits and vegetables, goats for milk, and sheep for wool to make warm clothing. You can learn more about The Heifer Project at [heifer.org](https://www.heifer.org).

Paper folders for quarter collection will be distributed to the Faith children and youth the first Sunday of Advent (December 1st); the congregation will also get their own collection pouches at that time too. Kids may turn in their collection on Christmas Eve or any Sunday through January 5th during the Children's Moment; Adults may place their quarters in the offering chest in the Narthex. Electronic giving may be done through the Faith website; [click here](#) and follow the prompts.



Let's make this year's campaign the largest yet and give disadvantaged families the best possible gift – a sustainable food source throughout the year and warm clothing to wear. Our pocket change can make this happen. Be an over-achiever and start saving your quarters now!

ANGEL TREE

This holiday season, we are excited to partner with the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless. They have created a Holiday Drive specifically for our congregation, enabling us to sponsor families and individuals in one of their housing programs. Faith will receive a wish list for the 20 families (just over 30 individuals), with specific items requested and links for easy online shopping when possible.

For wish list links to be easily shared, signup will be primarily online through this FUMC Angel Tree Signup. Some paper wish lists will be available on the Angel Tree in the sanctuary for those

who prefer to select an Angel that way. The paper lists will likely include families that do not have specific shopping links.

Suggested spending amounts are set up differently compared to prior years. Instead of pricing per individual, each family's wish list totals around \$100. Depending on your preference, you may choose to sponsor a family completely or select an individual on the wish list. If a link for a specific item(s) is given, please purchase that specific item when possible, either online or in person. There are a few families whose total does not reach \$100; for those, feel free to add a gift card (Visa, Giant, Target) to reach the \$100 level.

Unwrapped gifts should be returned to the church by **Monday, December 9th**. Youth and youth families will wrap our gifts- be on the lookout for the date!

Thank you for thinking of others this time of year and allowing Faith to once again support those in our community in need.

Questions? Contact Celina Schmidt at jakecelina@gmail.com.

FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR



THANK YOU

Our Bells of Faith have continued their tradition of contributing to 10 a.m. Sunday worship monthly, a tradition established even before my 16 years here. They've welcomed a new member this year and bring both enthusiasm and joy to their playing and to our worship services. Nancy Kuhn has graciously volunteered to lead this ensemble for many years, and she remains our go-to person for everything handbells at Faith.

Our Chancel Choir has faithfully contributed to 10 a.m. Sunday worship every week since Labor Day. They recently took on a larger role, presenting excerpts from Gabriel Fauré's Requiem on the Sunday following All Saints' Day. Kudos to our Tenor Section Leader, André Coleman, and to our volunteer baritone, Howard Bartlow, for their exceptional solos in that presentation.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our Young Singers of Faith have started rehearsing after 10 a.m. Sunday worship services. These singers are planning to contribute to worship on November 24, December 22, and at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve. If you know a child between the ages of 6 and 13 years who loves to sing, invite them to join us after the 10 a.m. worship and see if Young Singers of Faith is a good fit!

Our Chancel Choir is preparing a special service of music with a harp to be presented during the 10 a.m. worship on Sunday, December 8. Among the anthems we'll present are *There Is No Rose* and *This Little Babe* from Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*; the German carol *Still, Still, Still*, arranged by Philip Ledger; the French carol *Sing We Now of Christmas*, arranged by Carol Barnett; and Bob Chilcott's original composition *Mid-winter*, a setting of a famous Christina Rossetti hymn.

Our Bells of Faith; Chancel Choir; Organist, Ann Bartlow and a string quartet will lead the 8 p.m. Christmas Eve worship on Tuesday, December 24 beginning with an instrumental prelude at 7:30 p.m.

BEYOND FAITH

The Strathmore Children's Chorus, for which I have had the honor of serving as Artistic Director since 2017, presents *A World of Celebration* at the Music Center at Strathmore at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, December 6. Order tickets online at Strathmore.org.

With great appreciation,

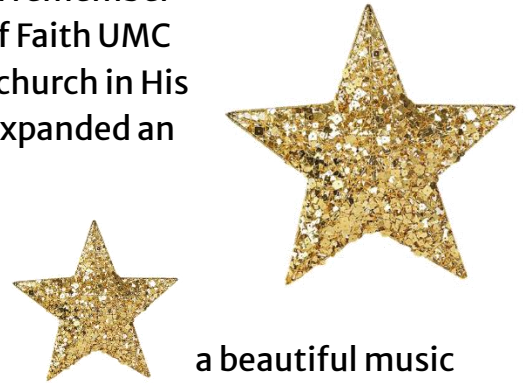
Michael



A GIFT FOR THE FUMC STAFF

Dear Members of Faith UMC,

As the season of Advent begins, Christians around the world remember the great gift of the newborn Jesus to our world. Members of Faith UMC also remember those who have contributed so much to our church in His name over the past year. With our staff this year, Faith has expanded an array of in-person activities, even as we continue to provide opportunities for virtual participation in worship, small groups, and the committees that guide our ministry. Our staff has moved Faith UMC forward with a full Sunday worship experience in the sanctuary and online, sustaining a program, enriching our children's programs, expanding opportunities, like "Messy Church", welcoming visitors and embracing diversity.



a beautiful music
non-traditional



Accordingly, the Staff Parish Relations Committee is asking you to consider a monetary gift to the staff as a thank you for jobs so well done. You may contribute using the weekly Sunday online portal which now includes an option to contribute to the Staff Christmas Gift, the Give Online feature [here](#) or send a check to the church office marked Staff Gift. The deadline is Noon on Friday, December 20 to allow time to process the gifts in time for Christmas.

Thank you so much.

Bill Maas, SPRC (Staff-Parish Relations Committee) Chair

LED WITH LOVE

In October, Faith held a church conference to adopt a new leadership structure. The change is intended to help us focus on our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. With fewer committees that are administrative in nature, our deep hope is that there is more time for members of faith to engage in acts of justice, mercy and compassion, sharing God's love.

Every year, members and friends of Faith share their gifts and talents so that the work of ministry happens. Leaders represent all of us behind the scenes in conversations that impact our shared work. Will you please take time to thank these leaders in the coming weeks?

The Church Council

Pam Kessler, Chair

Gary Clark

Rachel Hedrick

Carol Henley

Brian Jones

Nancy Kneisly, Chair, Outreach

Nancy Kuhn, Chair, Resource Team

Bill Maas, Chair, SPRC

Hunter Prillaman, Lay Member to Annual Conference

Jane Rall, Lay Leader

Sara Romeyn

Debbie Spriggs

The Resource Team

Nancy Kuhn, Chair

Jim Johnston

Jay Moore

Hunter Prillaman, Lay Member to Annual Conference

Jane Rall, Lay Leader

Kim Webster

Bruce Werber

Jennifer Young

The SPRC (STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE)

Bill Maas

Mary Gordon

Hunter Prillaman, Lay Member to Annual Conference

Jane Rall, lay leader

Celina Schmidt

The Outreach Team

Nancy Kneisly, Chair

Carol Henley

Kathy King

Bill Maas

A NEW SEASON FOR LEADING AT FAITH

At a called church conference on October 16, members voted to adopt a new simplified leadership structure. As council chair Pam Kessler shared in August, “The aim is to simplify the leadership structure by using teams for a project, instead of standing committees that meet monthly.”

Earlier in this newsletter, you read about our outgoing leaders who have served on our standing committees this past year. Now, our leadership team, which does the work of the SPRC, the resource team and the church council consists of nine members. There will be ad hoc teams called for work like preparing an annual budget, hiring new staff, planning seasonal worship themes, and addressing building use. People will be able to focus their gifts and have more time for acts of service and compassion.

You will hear from the leadership team throughout the year, and we’ll include their bios in an upcoming bulletin.

We also give thanks for Debbie Spriggs (Financial Secretary) and Bruce Werber (Treasurer) who have agreed to serve in discipline required financial leadership roles. Stay tuned for updates about the Faith Foundation leadership!



Bill Maas, Chair



Janelle Veazey, At-Large (2025)



Laura Norvell, Pastor



Rachel Hedrick, At-Large (2026)



Jane Rall, Lay Leader



Mike Kitzman, At-Large (2026)



Brian Jones, Lay Member of the Annual Conference



Mike Coppersmith, At-Large (2027)



Nancy Kneisly, At-Large (2025)



Jennifer Young, At-Large (2027)

MESSY CHURCH



On October 26, an enthusiastic group of participants and volunteers enjoyed a beautiful fall day full of messiness – Messy Church. The theme, loving one another, was based on John 13:34 – "a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." To set the tone, Pastor Laura introduced the idea of the most powerful emotion in the universe – love. Using paper hearts, participants were asked to write down how they show love. Our responses were arrayed on the bulleting board in the hallway outside of the church office – take a look when you have a chance!

The day included several activities to choose from based on the theme of love, including carving love pumpkins, which was quite messy; the making of salt dough, using leaves and sticks and rocks and an opportunity to paint quilt squares to eventually create a love quilt. A sermon that celebrated love followed by a delicious fall themed meal enjoyed in fellowship. Below are a few photos illustrating our love in action!

We thank all the volunteers that planned the activities, staffed the programs and lovingly made our meal!



Mark your calendar for our next Messy Church gathering on Saturday, December 14 from 4:30–6:30. The theme will be a *Messy Christmas* based on Luke 2:16–20. Volunteers are welcome and appreciated for help in the kitchen, setup/takedown, marketing, creating inspirational activities or sharing other talents and gifts. Please contact [Curtis Osborne](#) to volunteer your skills!

ROCKVILLE AREA YOUTH

In any church, our growth is most evident in our young people. After witnessing the blessing of Sunday school for so many of our growing youth, it was clear they were ready for the next step. With our shared commitment with North Bethesda UMC, Rockville Area Youth has met that need. Our youth started with a kick-off event at the end of September at Cabin John Park, where our young people and their families met and mingled and ate together. Since then, we have met each Sunday evening, alternating locations between Faith Church and North Bethesda. Our youth have gotten to know each other, played games, and shared meals provided by members of our congregations. In mid-October, they made and served an extravagant taco bar for the women at the Interfaith Works Women's Center in Rockville. We have explored our churches, played together and built community. As we enter our new year, we have so many opportunities for our youth to work together and reach out to help others.

Want to help our youth? Spend some time with us. There is no preparation necessary – just join in the fun! Not ready for an evening with us yet? Bring a meal! We are looking for volunteers to bring dinner on a Sunday night. You can sign up for both by contacting Suzanne Smedberg at ssmedberg@FaithWorksHere.com or calling the church office at 301-881-1881.

We are growing something new and exciting in our youth – are you ready to join us?

NOVEMBER 17-DECEMBER 8

Our youth will be holding a toy and book drive for the city of Rockville Holiday Drive. They will be reaching out to the community to provide new or gently used toys and books that can be donated to young people in need right here in our area. This is a great opportunity for you to clean out before the holiday rush begins! Stay tuned for more information on how you can help.

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

We will begin the study, *Advent: Reality v. Expectations*, from the Center for Youth Ministry Training. Focused on those moments when our expectations don't align with our reality, this study allows us to explore what it meant for Mary and Joseph as their lives were turned upside down by the ultimate call. Join us to see how God meets us in our surprise realities and shattered expectations.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

Join us for our family Christmas party on December 22 from 5:00–8:00 p.m. at North Bethesda UMC for food, fellowship and Christmas cheer. All are welcome!

IN THE NEW YEAR SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

Come bowl with us on January 26! Conquer the winter doldrums with lanes and stylish shoes – more information to come!

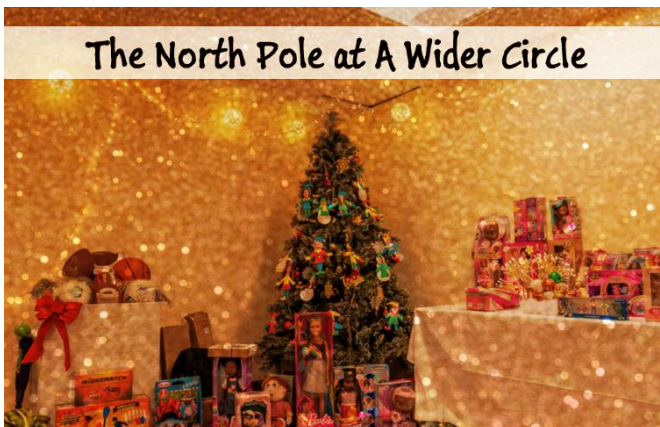
AND IN FEBRUARY

Nothing says love like serving others! We will spend part of our February spreading the love by providing acts of service to those in the community. Do you know someone who could use a little love? Reach out to youth coordinator, Suzanne Smedberg at ssmedberg@faithworkshere.com or 301-881-1881.

AIM (ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY)

As Faith strives to be a welcoming environment to all God's children, the AIM committee is continuing to do the work of improving our accessibility to individuals with disabilities so that they can feel included in worship, other church programs, and our Faith community. We are hoping to communicate better with individuals who may need accommodation to access our building and our programs by providing information on our website, improving signage, and making it easier for folks to use our facilities. Please look for positive changes to come. Most importantly, we strive to be God's light in welcoming individuals who may have differing abilities from us by using respectful person-centered language, exercising patience and kindness in our interactions, and recognizing we are all beloved of God. If you would like to contribute more of your time or talents to this ministry or have ideas for improving accessibility, please contact Jennifer Young at young.jennifer@gmail.com.

EMPTY NESTER EVENT



The Empty Nesters is a group of parents of young adults who meet quarterly for fellowship, fun, and service. Our next event is Saturday, December 7th, from 10 am to 12 noon, at A Wider Circle in Silver Spring, Maryland. We will have a tour, learn more about the work of this important non-profit, and volunteer in the "North Pole," where we will help organize toys and gifts for their Good Karma Holiday Program. After, we will head to the

Parkway Deli for a casual, no-host lunch. RSVP by reaching out to Denise Bryant at jdsabryant@comcast.com.

FAITH UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION, INC.

Established in 1998, the Faith United Methodist Foundation is organized to operate exclusively for charitable and religious purposes to fulfill the purposes and local outreach of Faith UMC. It is a separate non-profit organization with its own Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

The Foundation has an investment policy statement that allows it to award funds each year that are over the annual inflation adjusted corpus at the end of the calendar year. These funds require organizations to submit a grant application sponsored by a member of Faith United Methodist Church. Members of Faith are encouraged to reach out to local non-profits when funds are available. Grant applications are solicited in March and on average the funding is between \$500-\$2,000.

In 2022, the Foundation awarded over \$23,000 to ten organizations. Mercy Health Clinic, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, Rainbow Place Shelter for Homeless Women, Rockville Seniors, Interfaith Works and Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative were a few of the grantees. Unfortunately, the Foundation was not within the stated guidelines to confer grants in 2023 or 2024.

As of October 1, 2024, our portfolio was approximately \$170,000 and it appears that the Foundation will be able to solicit grants in 2025.

As the Chair and member of the Foundation since 2006, Barbara Wege has successfully steered the board. Comprised of Faith members, the board has included Gordon Henley, Jim Johnston, Bill Rooker and Bruce Werber. If you are interested in serving on the Foundation board, please contact Barbara Wege.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING EXPLORATION

Faith's Affordable Housing Study Group has started its participation in the Enterprise Faith Based Development Initiative where members will receive training through June 2025 in real estate development and community engagement, project design and construction, how to structure financing, and project operations. The goal is to become "comfortably



conversant” with the process for potentially developing affordable housing on Faith’s property and resources that are available to us for doing that. As part of this process, Faith participants will receive one-on-one technical assistance and grant funding support to help determine how a vision could advance to completion. As the Faith Affordable Housing Study Group becomes more knowledgeable about the process for building affordable housing on Faith’s property, we will look for opportunities to share what we have learned with the Faith community. In the meantime, please feel free to contact Rev. Laura or Jennifer Young with any questions or thoughts on this process of discernment.

As we move into Advent Season and think about how Jesus Christ began his earthly life in humble surroundings as Mary and Joseph sought a safe place to stay, we can meditate on how many people still search for such a place. In the words of Isaiah 32:18: “My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”

FAITH UMC STAFF

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell, Pastor

Ann Bartlow, Organist

André Coleman, Tenor Section Leader

Valerie Kunsman, Office Administrator

Kris Neale, Ministry Intern

Curtis Osborne, Coordinator of Intergenerational Nurture

Tessa Rickets, Nursery Staff

Kim Webster, Finance Manager

Dr. Michael Wu, Music Director