

From Pastor Rachel

Merry Christmas! Something I've learned over the years in ministry & motherhood is that a new baby brings people together. When a child is born, grandparents & aunts and uncles and cousins all stop by to visit the newborn and there is joy and excitement in the air. Even complete strangers will stop a young mother or father out with a baby to smile and welcome the little one to the world. The birth of Christ was no different. His entrance into the world would bring shepherds and wise men together at the foot of the cross with the angel chorus singing overhead. Those with ex-

treme wealth & wisdom would kneel beside the poor and downtrodden to welcome the Christ child to earth. New life brings people together! We have just celebrated one year of new life together as one church and there is a lot of joy and excitement about what God is doing here at The Gathering at Scott Memorial UMC! The merger of our churches created a new life as a congregation and we continue to welcome new babies & children into our church family as well! A few weeks ago we had 65 children under the age of 11 at our 10am service so our building is full of the laughter, love and joy of God's chil-

dren! I'm honored to be your pastor and to help us continue to live into our new life together. As Christmas approaches and we prepare for the coming of Christ, may you see the new life ALL around you and praise God for His faithfulness at The Gathering at Scott Memorial UMC!

- Rev. Rachel Gilmore



THE GATHERING at SCOTT MEMORIAL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

409 First Colonial Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

Christmas 2016 EDITION



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UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Courier

RECONNECTING WITH GOD, OURSELVES, OTHERS, AND CREATION

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Advent - Time to Prepare

Andrew Schwartz

*Minister of Pastoral Care
& Spiritual Formation*

I have a few friends who are big into the “prepper” movement. Maybe you have heard of this? People stock up on non-perishable food, survival gear, ammunition and other odds and ends they feel is necessary if the global economy or the electrical grid or any other important societal structure col-

lapses all the sudden. One of my friends is even planning to move to the remote mountains of West Virginia to join a communal society based on the fear that something like this WILL happen soon.

Though I can totally understand the fear that lies just beneath the surface in our culture and I also appreciate fully the desire and process of being prepared, I wonder if some of the more extreme cases you hear about are just an outward sign of someone who has misplaced their hope.

Fear can be gripping and like a ferocious disease, can spread fast. I think spirituality, in one of it's most healthiest demonstrations, is the process of keeping our hearts embraced by Love and noticing when and where in our lives we are giving fear a foot hold.

In 1 John 4:18 it says:

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

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Now there is verse to meditate and chew on.

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

What does this have to do with Christmas? Therein lies this wonderful, frustrating and necessary season of Advent. As I mentioned above, Advent gives space for that kind of spiritual cleansing we all need often, to remove the clutter and identify what is really important. We look back upon Jesus’ birth into our world with great thanksgiving and joy and then we also look ahead to the coming of Christ again, the hopeful day when all things are made new, when we are all transformed into perfect love.

As we wait, we can ask ourselves and we can ask each other:

When Jesus comes, will there be room for him to stay, or will he find my heart and soul too cluttered? Am I hanging onto things I don’t need out of that “just in case” type of fear? Or, do I trust him enough to let everything go? Have I taken the necessary time to free up space for him? Is my priority, in fact, Jesus, or is it things or other attachments? When he comes, will I be able to respond to him freely, or will my movements be impeded by stuff that’s holding me back? My soul-cleaning goal is to be able to fling open the door to my heart and fearlessly let go of

*all of those things that might get in the way of his entry. Can I do this?**

May we challenge each other to boldly ask such provocative & holy questions and give space to honestly look at ourselves in light of God’s mercy and coming! A blessed Advent to you my friends.

- Andrew Schwartz
Minister of Pastoral Care
& Spiritual Formation



**this paragraph taken from the wonderful prayer website run by an Ignatian community of monks:
www.sacredspace.ie*



In the summer of 2016, Crystal Miller had an idea that came from the heart of God. She wanted to expand the outreach ministries offered on Wednesday evenings at the church, so she worked together with her husband and the Hamilton family to start up a clothing locker. They used generous donations left over from the UMW yard sale along with donations

“The Next Step” Stewardship Campaign 2017
It’s not too late to be a partner in taking TGASMUMC to the next step! Stewardship Pledge Cards are still available on Sundays or online at our website. If you would like a Stewardship Pledge Card mailed to you, please contact Char at the church office.

Christmas Eve Services
Saturday, Dec. 24
4 pm, 5:30 pm & 7 pm
Please join us as we celebrate how God came to earth in an extraordinary way. Family friendly. Childcare provide. Invite your family & friends.

from a non-profit Mom’s group in the area and the Lighthouse Homeless Shelter. Those donations were doubled by the donations from church members. The clothing locker is located on the second floor of the church in the room that was previously used for storage. Hundreds of people have been blessed by the clothing locker min-

PRAYER REQUESTS ♥ Remembering in Prayer

Church Family

Agatha Sigley	George Schimmel	Pete & Johnnie Wright
Betty White	Harriet VanBlarcom	Wilson Widgoen
Betty Wise	Herk & Lennie Stokley	Loving Family on the loss of Libby’s Mother, Agnes Chamberlain.
Carla Morrisette	Jackie Ginn	
Chris Ramsey & Family	Jill Moore	
Cindy Sager, daughter of	Joe Wise	
Jean Schimmel	Naomi Mitchell	

Friends & Relatives

Alan Reil, (brother of Barney Reil)	Elizabeth & Betty Rehpelz	Larry Caffee
Bill Carroll	Gene Sipe	Loretta Tate
Chad Stokely, (son of Herk & Lennie Stokely)	Janet Deham	Marion Thomas
Charlotte Biggs	John Hendriksen	Patricia Childers
Donald Hall (nephew of Betty & Barney Reil, kidney failure)	Jonathan Todd, (nephew of Lauren Graham)	Preston Smith
Dwayne Einsphar		Sandy Vickers, Starke, FL

Missionaries

Kate & David O’Donnell
Vladi & Nadia Todorov
Georgi Boev
Reyes Family

Our world, our country, & our leaders

Misplaced refugees throughout the world

PRAYER CHAIN

The Prayer Chain is a part of the United Methodist Women’s Mission Coordinator-Spiritual Growth and has been active for over 25 years. Anyone who wishes the Prayer Chain to be activated for them or for someone else (upon their request) should call: **Pastor Rachel, 428-3720 AND Shirley Lane, 497-6263** or **Betty Horner, 340-2686** to activate the Prayer Chain. When we receive notice to active the Prayer Chain, the information is passed to our UMW Callers who notify others of the request. If you would like to be apart of us and be notified of the Prayer Chain calls, please contact Betty Horner, 340-2686.

Children's Ministry

at the Gathering at Scott Memorial

New Director Children Ministry's - Megan Hosseinipoor

Hello my name is Megan Hosseinipoor and I'm excited to be the new Director of Children's Ministry here at The Gathering at Scott Memorial UMC. I am a stay at home mom to three wonderful children, Carson who is 7 years old, Camden who is 4 years old, and Denley who is 2 years old. I was raised here in Virginia Beach and love calling this place my home. My family enjoys playing outside with our friendly neighbors and going to the Norfolk Zoo. We have been a part of this

church for almost 4 years and I am so happy to be involved with the children here. I have helped lead Moms Bible Study and Gathering Gals and enjoyed meeting wonderful ladies of our church. I was a part of our past two blood drives with the Chesapeake Life group and have a passion of helping those in need. I hope to see everyone at our Christmas Eve early services to see our children in action, as they bring the true meaning of Christmas to life on stage. I look forward to what the future of the Children's Ministry brings to this new year and how I can help be a part of our children's future.



Megan Hosseinipoor - Director of Children's Ministry

Numbered Giving Envelopes

If you would like a yearly bundle of giving envelopes with your envelope number, **please contact Char at the church office.** Envelope bundles will be issued **by request only** and will be ready a week before Jan. 2017.

Do you know where your money goes?

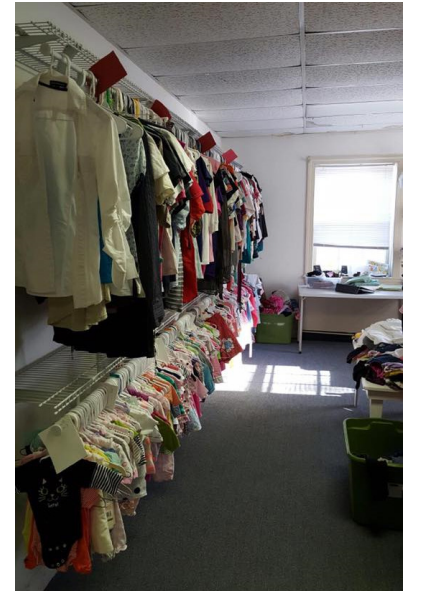
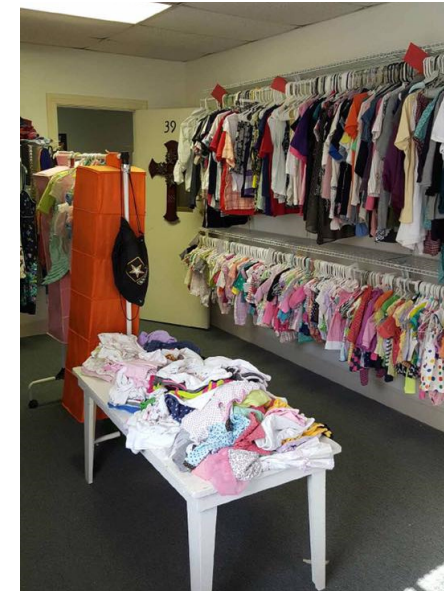
We have spent over \$4,000 this year helping out victims of Disaster Relief in Tappahannock following the tornadoes and in Virginia Beach following the flooding from Hurricane Matthew. When you give generously on Sunday mornings, we are able to use your gifts to help those in dire need like the disabled Veteran Rodney and his wife whom we helped out in November. Thanks to

the partnership between multiple United Methodist Churches and with the leadership of Michele Michaelian, our chair of Mission and Outreach and the District Disaster Relief Coordinator for the Virginia United Methodist Church, we were able to help Rodney and his wife muck out their house and refurbish it from floors to ceilings and everything in between. A team of folks went out the Tuesday before Thanksgiving to finish sanding and painting the drywall and they are grateful for our role in bringing them home for the holidays. Throughout the month of December we will be donating 100% of all loose plate offering and any checks

or envelopes labeled "Disaster Relief" to use on the hundreds of families still awaiting assistance following the Hurricane. Thank you for all of your donations to this worthwhile cause! Bishop Lewis was in Virginia Beach just a few weeks ago assisting with the cause and learning more about what the United Methodist Church can do to help people rebuild their lives following this natural disaster! She commends you for your support of our efforts here in Hampton Roads. If you would like to donate your time, please contact Michele Michaelian so she can put you to work. There is so much to do and we need all hands on deck!

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istry at the church, showing up on Wednesday evenings for clothing, purses, shoes, & hygiene items. We are always in need of gently used socks and clothing in larger sizes for men and women. It has been amazing to see how people have had their dignity or self-esteem restored just by being able to get a new outfit! If you would like to help by donating clothing, shampoo, or soap or by stopping by to assist in setting up or handing out clothing on Wednesday evenings, **please contact, Crystal Miller: perezmillr2926@gmail.com.**



Our clothing locker ministry is located on the 2nd floor of the church and is open from 5:30 pm -7pm every Wednesday.

Advent Happenings

Helping to prepare hearts this Advent Season



**Virtual Advent Prayer Challenge
Mondays & Wednesdays
Nov. 28 - Dec. 21.**

Join us Mondays @ 6:30 am & Wednesdays @ 8 pm, Nov. 28 - Dec. 21 for Advent prayer on Facebook - The Gathering at Scott Memorial UMC. We hope this will enrich you & your family's Advent experience as we await the coming Messiah. If you do not have Facebook, please contact the church office and we can email you the recorded meditation.



**"The Carols of Christmas"
Advent Sermon Series**

The birth of Christ set into a motion a story that still affects us. Often words fail us as we think about the magnitude of Jesus' birth, but the words of carols that we've sung for hundreds of years can sometimes express just what we wanted to say. "Silent Night, Holy Night, All is Calm, All is Bright...." Join us in December at The Gathering at Scott Memorial UMC as we learn more about the Carols of Christmas!



Being the last month in the year and with all projects completed, except one; that is the process of making end of the year monetary donations to many local missions; as has been done for many past years.

We are closing this year with our UMW & guest Christmas Luncheon on December 10th, 1 p.m. at The Virginian Steakhouse. Dorothy Belile will present the entertainment. Looking forward to a wonderful time.

I would like to take this time to express my gratitude to the United Methodist Women for electing me as their President for 2016. Praises go to my officers for all they have done for me and for the UMW. You helped to keep us afloat. Thank you is also extended to the Circle Leaders for their time and many expense. To circle members, thank you for your participation in our various projects. United we Stand. We could not have accomplished so much without your help Betty Horner.

With the new year just around the corner, we find there's schedules to be adopted,

missions to address, monetary projects to present and the list goes on.

MAY YOU HAVE A BLESSED CHRISTMAS!

- Betty Horner
President, UMW at TGASMUMC

FAITH • LOVE • HOPE
in action

Hilltoppers

Our Ladies & Gents meet monthly, the third Tuesday at 1 p.m. at different Virginia Beach Restaurants and Golden Corals. We are a friendly group, won't you come and join us? Just contact Betty Horner 340-2686 by the Sunday before.

- **December 20th, 1 p.m.** will be our Christmas meeting at IHOP at Hilltop (817 First Colonial Rd) (those attending call by December 18th)
- **January 17th, 1 p.m.**, our first meeting in 2017, will be at the Golden Corral, 400 South Independence Blvd. (those attending call by January 15th)

Looking forward to our being together!

Society of St. Andrew



It is difficult to think the year of 2016 is drawing to a close. There have been many things happening this year and we should be very thankful for all of our blessings. One way to show our blessings is to help people who are less fortunate than us. I know we have many missions going on in the Church and many people with their hands out asking for help with worthwhile missions. I happen to be one of those asking for help for the Society of St Andrew. With our change we can really make a big difference for the less fortunate in our community and

around the country. Our change helps get food stuffs, which would otherwise be left in fields to rot, to food banks, churches and other organizations that feed and distribute food to the people who either cannot afford food or must choose between food and paying the rent.

Remember the 4th Sunday of each month and bring your change and or paper money to put in the potato cups on the alter and other places around the building or place your check in the offering plates, marked SoSA. There is also a bulletin board on the Sunday school wing wall that keeps the amount donated posted so we can see how we are doing. Our budget this year is \$1,200.00. **Re-**

In 2016 we have:

- Packaged 10,000 meals to send overseas
- Put together 400 birthing kits to help women overseas
- Handed out 750 care packages to homeless persons
- Provided hundreds of meals for homelessness @ the Judeo Christian Outreach Center
- Helped organize the Longest Night Vigil to remember homeless persons who have passed away
- Provided almost \$50,000 in scholarship funding for preschoolers at Beach Gathering Montessori Preschool & the Gathering Academic Preschool
- Sorted clothes for the clothing closet at the Lighthouse Ministry
- Provided fresh produce to an estimated 100 households each week through Fresh Food Wednesday
- Provided canned goods to dozens of households each month through our Food Pantry
- Purchased school supplies & clothing for children at Diamond Springs Elementary School
- Written cards to the US Embassies in Paris, Beirut and Baghdad to thank them for their work to bring peace to our world
- Written thank you cards to every officer in our local precinct
- Given thousands of dollars to families in need to help with medical bills, utility bills & rent
- Hand-deliver hundreds of pounds of shoes, baby carriers and other supplies to Syrian refugees
- Hosted 2 blood drives
- Housed 3 homeless families for a week in June at the church and provide meals and lodging.
- Continue to serve others through our missional preschool ministry, outreach with the homeless and other monthly community service opportunities.

member this is a Church-wide mission.

As of the November 27, 2016 we have collected \$1,335.60 for the Society of St. Andrew. This puts us over our stated budget but we need to continue funding this mission.

I have and will continue to pray for our success in this mission.

- Jean Schimmel

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**WE BELIEVE IN
INCARNATIONAL
MISSIONS - BRINGING
CHRIST'S LOVE TO BEAR ON
A HURTING WORLD WITH
OUR HEARTS & HANDS.**