

DECEMBER 2024 - JANUARY 2025

The Grapevine

NEWSLETTER OF CHESTER BETHEL UMC

Hope



As you decorate and prepare your hearts and minds for Christmas, you are welcome to pray this Prayer of Blessing of a Nativity Scene over your crèche:

God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of Creation you have made manifest your love. When our need for a Savior was great, you sent your Son to be born of the virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy, peace, justice, mercy, and love. Lord, bless all who look upon this manger. May it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise up our thoughts to Him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

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The Magi Come in January!

Rev. Kelly
Conner

Nativity scenes, or crèches, are very popular decorations at Christmastime. But they are far more than simple décor! They lead us on our Advent journey to welcome anew the Baby Jesus every year on Christmas Day. One of my pet peeves in worship (and as you know, I have many!) is when churches do not honor the birth of Jesus and the arrival of the Magi as separate events. After all, they didn't all arrive in Nazareth at the same time! To have the most accurate Nativity scene, set up figurines of Mary and Joseph early on in Advent, along with an empty manger, as they wait for Jesus to be born. Then, on the 25th, add the infant Jesus figurine to celebrate the birth of Christ. The Magi, or Wise Men, don't come along until Epiphany on January 6th!

While Christian art is as old as our religion itself, the earliest church-commissioned Nativity scenes that we know of began cropping up in medieval times. There are only a few documented tales of these early examples. One example is a story about Pope Gregory VII in 1075, who was “kidnapped by armed men” while “performing a Christmas mass at the basilica [in Rome].” Another example is the Nativity scene that Pope Nicholas IV commissioned in 1292; it was a marble sculpture made by Italian artist Arnolfo di Cambio, and this sculpture is rumored to have included a wooden fragments from Jesus' actual wooden crib. (Of course, we will never know if this particular relic truly comes from the original manger of the Baby Jesus, but it's cool to think about!) By the 1500s, the city of Naples, Italy had become famous for its lavish Nativity scenes!

This information came from the Smithsonian Magazine.

[Click to learn more:](#)

Nativities Display: Dec 14, 12-6 PM & Dec. 15, 10-4 PM

at Church of the Ascension, Philadelphia Pike, Claymont, DE





Sylvia, Nancy and Polly help cook for Emmanuel Dining Room!

**Missions Team
Makes
Waves!**

Chester Bethel's mission outreach is all out of proportion to her size. Between the large footprint of the Thrift Shop's dollar donations to area charities, the food collected and faithfully driven by Milli to Claymont, the huge amount of Hurricane relief clothing delivered by the Thrift Shop, and other aid to the poor, the forgotten, the cold & disaster victims, CBUMC reaches out to those in need.

Thank you to our Missions Team, Nancy, Milli, Linda, Barbara, Phyllis, Dora, Laura, Sylvia, Polly and all who give from their hearts.



"Socks for Seamen"

PLEASE BRING WARM SOCKS FOR THE CREWS ON SHIPS IN THE PORT OF WILMINGTON. MANY NEED WARMER CLOTHES!

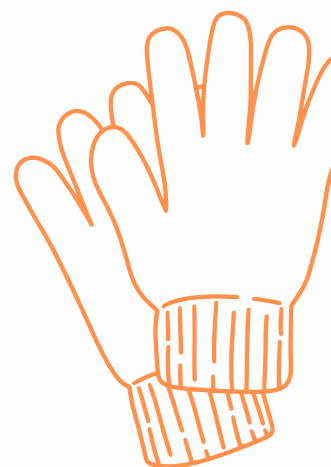


SEAMEN'S CENTER OF WILMINGTON, INC





Staff and sailors at the Wilmington Seamens Center



Missions Reminders!

We are still collecting new socks and personal hygiene products to be delivered to different charities. This year we are delivering socks to sailors at the Wilmington Seamens Center. We also collect food to be delivered weekly to Claymont Community Center.

For this quarter we are financially supporting:

The Good Samaritan Fund

Food Bank of Delaware

Pecometh Camp

Don't forget to shop at the Thrift Shop before it closes for the year on December 21st

Dates to Remember

- Dec. 1 - Advent begins**
- Dec. 10 - Trustees mtg 6 PM**
- Dec. 11 - Admin Council 6 PM**
- Dec. 20-Jan. 2 - Preschool Out**
- Dec. 24- Xmas Eve Service
at CBUMC 7 PM
Office Closed.**
- Dec. 25 - Christmas Day**
- Jan. 31 - Office Closed**
- Jan. 1 - New Year's Day**
- Jan. 6 - Epiphany**
- Jan. 7 - SPRC mtg 3:30 PM**
- Jan. 8 - Admin. Council 6 PM**
- Jan. 14 - Trustees 6 PM**
- Jan. 20 - MLK Day**



we either add to the darkness of indifference...or we light a candle to see by..."

-Madeleine L'Engle

Please Pray for:

Linda Lyons (L); Nancy Storer (L); Bill and Doreen Jones (H); Mary Ann Box (H); Darene Hazel (H); Ramona Harlow (LT); Jane Dean (H); Lillian Williams (H); Richard J. Steele (H); Holly Dorner (H); Donna McCormick (H); DeBrock Family (O); Laura White (H); Allison (H); Kim Nally; Amy (H); Cecelia Steele's family (L); Gail Kracyla (H); Dominic King (LT); Jill Brownback (LT); Nancy Walker (H); Mabel & Alan Ladd (H); MaryAnn Rumford (LT); Rick Browne (LT); all peoples impacted by war.

Hurricane Helene Recovery in North Carolina



A ruined piano and church pews are piled with flood debris for disposal outside Pensacola United Methodist Church in Burnsville, N.C., after the church was flooded by storm runoff following Tropical Storm Helene.

Specially trained United Methodist Early Response Teams have been working in the affected areas since Oct. 8, and more than 500 United Methodists signed up to complete the required training to serve during the stabilization phase between relief and recovery.

“The last five weeks have been a time of trial, suffering and death. And yet, we are resurrection people, people of hope. This is the good news that we preach. Now is the time to claim this good news in our own lives,” (Bishop) Carter said in an Oct. 31 letter to church members. [**Read More Here...**](#)



Preschool Building Project updates:

For those who missed the Nov. 23rd meeting to discuss changes to the Church Building to accommodate the Preschool as it removes the modular building, please contact the office for a summary of the issues and proposals to change the church's layout.

Comments are welcome; please write or call the office!

