

# MESSENGER

A monthly publication for family and friends of Munsey Memorial United Methodist Church



**Ministry Spotlight**  
4 Generations of the  
Patterson, Scalf and Greer families  
tells us what Munsey means to them  
in our January Ministry  
Spotlight found on page 6

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## A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR KIP



Happy New Year!

I was really taken with a story I recently ran across as told by fellow United Methodist minister Rev. King Duncan. Truth be told, I laughed myself silly! It seems that Steven was a young man who felt the call of God on his life. He came from a close family who grew up together in a small, rural Methodist congregation. He finished college and then went off to seminary. After finishing seminary he came back home while he was waiting for the bishop to appoint him to his first pastorate.

He visited with his relatives who were all equally proud of the ministerial vocation he had embraced. He stopped by the church and talked to his hometown pastor. The pastor asked him if he would like to preach that upcoming Sunday. Steven felt honored and took the pastor up on the invitation. Sunday morning came and after hours of nervous preparation he stepped up behind the pulpit, looked out at the congregation of smiling friends and family and began to share his well hewn sermon.

He had only preached for a few minutes, when his young niece, Kathleen, about six years old, stepped out into the center aisle and put her hands on her hips, cocked her head to one side, and declared in a very loud and clear voice, "Uncle Steven, you don't know what you are talking about!"

I don't know how Uncle Steven finished that sermon, but I have no doubt it was an experience that would stay with him for a long time! I identify with this story because I know what it is to be fresh out of seminary and just beginning my ministry and going back home to preach at the church I was reared in. It is not easy and highly intimidating because it is arduous to impress the home crowd. The outside world may think your preaching is the best thing since sliced bread, but down home, folks see you as that mischievous kid who inadvertently set the paraments on fire that one Sunday!

So, let's be honest. There is just so much that we don't know, even though we talk about it. We don't know what this year will hold when it comes to our health, our jobs and careers, retirement, and the future of our families, just to name a few. It can all be so overwhelming, not to mention discouraging. Our failures, letdowns, and disappointments all make for heavy baggage that many tend to carry with them through life. But there is a power-source available to each of us that can enable us to get up, get over it, and get on with our spiritual journey.

Following the first Sunday in January known as The Epiphany when we commemorate the visit of the Magi in the culmination of Christmastide, on January 12<sup>th</sup> we will introduce a new sermon series for the New Year entitled **The Power of the Plus Factor: What It Is, and Why You Need It!**

I assure you that this "plus factor" will set 2025 on the right path for you! To find out what "it" – the Plus Factor – is, be in worship on January 12!

May God's richest blessings be yours, and until I see you Sunday, may grace keep you in the hollow of God's hand!  
Pastor Kip

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## LADIES' LUNCH

All ladies are welcome to join us on **Monday, January 13, at 12:00pm** at Ole's Guacamoles, and we look forward to lunch and fellowship together. Please let Amanda Onks know ([amanda@munsey.org](mailto:amanda@munsey.org)) if you plan to be there so we can save you a seat.

## WOMEN'S STUDY GROUP

Our Women's Study Group meets on Monday mornings from 9:30-11:00am in the Parlor and will resume on **January 6**. We'll be studying *None Like Him: 10 Ways God is Different from Us (and Why That's a Good Thing)* by Jen Wilkin. All women are welcome, and please let Amanda Onks ([amanda@munsey.org](mailto:amanda@munsey.org)) know if you have questions or would like to join us!

## WAYNE ANDERSON PRAYER GROUP

The Wayne Anderson Men's Prayer Group meets **Thursday mornings at 6:30am** in the Christian Life Center Meeting Room. We invite all men of all churches to join us for study, prayer, and fellowship. For more information, please email Bill Darden ([billdarden7@aol.com](mailto:billdarden7@aol.com)).

## FROM THE PARISH NURSE

Holiday weight gain got you down?..... You're Not Alone!

This time of year is filled with treats and get togethers, which is wonderful. We should be enjoying those things, but it can lead to unintended weight gain. I always advise to stop trying to lose weight during the holidays, instead try to maintain! If you can make it through December without gaining the average of 1-5 pounds you are doing great! If you do gain a few pounds, that's okay too. For those that would be interested in a healthy eating/weight loss class in January or February, please let me know. Emily Ham, RN [Parishnurse@munsey.org](mailto:Parishnurse@munsey.org)

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT PROGRAMS

We have programs for all ages from 6:00-7:15pm each Wednesday, resuming **January 8!** If you would like to bring your dinner with you before programs begin, tables are available around the gym floor from 5:30-6:00pm. We have these studies for adults:

- *The Cross & the Crescent: Understanding the Differences and Commonalities Between Christianity and Islam* led by Rev. Dr. Kip Laxson and **beginning January 15**; please register at [www.munsey.org/rsvp](http://www.munsey.org/rsvp).
- Women's Community Group led by Gwen Sitsch and Amanda Onks: a group of women in various stages of life who are looking deeply into the life of Jesus and encouraging one another to recognize the presence and movement of God in the day-to-dayness of life (Gathering Place)
- Men's Community Group: a group of like-minded Christian men from diverse backgrounds wanting to strengthen their faith through weekly discussions and fellowship (Parlor)

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, we follow Johnson City Schools' schedule for church programs. If schools dismiss early or close on a weekday, we won't have evening activities at Munsey that day. The church office will be open on weekdays, as staff are able to safely travel to the church. Sunday morning schedules will be adapted and shared via social media and email as needed for weekend snow.

## A LOOK AT YOUR WEEKLY GIFTS AND ATTENDANCE

	12/1/24	12/8/24	12/15/24	12/22/24	12/29/24
<b>Weekly Budget Offering</b>	\$26,803	\$25,649	\$58,410	\$21,788	N/A*
<b>Weekly Budget Requirement:</b>	<b>\$29,970</b>				
<b>Missions Offering</b>	\$683	\$3,627	\$2,648	\$5,188	N/A*
<b>Worship Attendance</b>	233	306	291	293	N/A*

### MESSENGER DEADLINE

The deadline for the February Messenger submissions is **January 23, 2025**.

\*At the time of publication there was no information for the offering or attendance for 12/29/24

## MISSIONS UPDATES

Many friends and neighbors had their world turned upside down three months ago when Hurricane Helene zipped through East Tennessee and Western North Carolina. The catastrophic flooding it caused left a path of death and destruction. Power outages, road closures, and boil water advisories meant many families were isolated with no power, internet, or cellular service for weeks. Except for the hardest-to-reach areas, most families and businesses have had their power restored and water boil advisories lifted. Efforts are now focused on getting families back in their homes.

The Munsey Flood Recovery Task Force continues to find the best way for our church to be a part of these rebuilding efforts. Dave Culberson met with Caleb Frazier, director of the Wesley Foundation at ETSU and member of Embreeville UMC, in December and learned that a local Baptist church has purchased land where three Embreeville UMC families will have new homes built by Appalachia Service Project (ASP). The Christmas Eve Offering will be used by ASP to build new homes for these families and others in our community.



The first two photos above are of the new home sites. In the third photo, Caleb Frazier is pointing out where the original homes had been before the new riverbank in the photo was created when the Nolichucky River flooded.

## PRISON MINISTRY OUTREACH

Munsey's 26th Annual Christmas Party at Northeast Prison was held in December. Several Munsey members served a tasty meal of chicken croissant sandwiches, finger foods, cookies made by the youth, and brownies. Brett Smith, director of Munsey contemporary worship, was joined by several other musicians to provide music for the evening. In addition to the music, a short message was shared. The evening ended with the sharing of presents to about 125 residents of Unit 8. This annual event is a pleasure of love and something to look forward to each year.

## MELTING POT MINISTRIES

Volunteers are critical to the mission of sharing the love of Jesus with our downtown neighbors. You can join this ministry by volunteering with the Shepherd's Breakfast (Saturdays) or the Open-Door worship and light breakfast (Sundays). To learn more, contact Anthony Jackson at [anthony.jackson@munsey.org](mailto:anthony.jackson@munsey.org).

### SHEPHERDS BREAKFAST COMPANIONS (Serving Breakfast 7:45am - 9:15am on Saturdays)

**January 4:** Anthony, Liz, Dick and Karen (Volunteers Needed)  
**January 11:** Journey's Hiking Group  
**January 18:** ETSU Health Bridge  
**January 25:** Anthony, Liz, Dick and Karen (Volunteers Needed)

To serve or learn more about our Saturday morning ministry for our downtown neighbors, contact Anthony Jackson at [anthony.jackson@munsey.org](mailto:anthony.jackson@munsey.org) or Sharon Pickering (423-491-4616) at [sharonpickering520@gmail.com](mailto:sharonpickering520@gmail.com) or go to [www.munsey.org/meltingpot](http://www.munsey.org/meltingpot) to sign up.



To sign up for Open Door worship or Shepherds Breakfast, go to [munsey.org/meltingpot](http://munsey.org/meltingpot) or scan QR code.

## NORTH SIDE ELEMENTARY - A GREAT PLACE TO BE!

Charles Dickens once wrote, "No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another." This past month, many Sunday school members worked to lighten the burdens of families in the North Side community. The Brown Fellowship class donated 200 snack crackers and 72 goldfish bags for the Special Ed students during the day. The Open Door class, headed by

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Jo and Chris Hemphill, adopted eight students and three of their younger siblings. Each student received 8 shirts, 2-3 pairs of pants, socks, underwear, pajamas, a coat, shoes, toiletries and two toys on their wish list. The women of the class ate lunch together and wrapped the presents. These acts of kindness definitely lightened the burdens of the students' parents.

In addition to these generous gifts, the members of the congregation supplied items from the wish lists on the teacher tree. Much thanks goes to the youth department for organizing this project and delivering the gifts to the teachers. It's a difficult time to be teaching and this personal gift really gives a lift to the teachers. They always really appreciate all that Munsey members do for them!

Next month, our Monthly Giving will be Clorox wipes and Kleenex. This helps the teachers fight off the germs that naturally come with runny noses of little children. As always, your generosity is really appreciated because it makes North Side a great place to be! ~Susanna Chinouth

## **NORTH SIDE SCHOOL FOOD BOX MINISTRY**

- Families Served - 246
- Food Boxes Delivered - 352
- Food Bags Delivered - 846
- Volunteers - 97 (food boxes delivered by Munsey volunteers)
- Volunteers - 86 (food bags delivered by ETSU Wesley Foundation)

We saw a 30% decrease in food boxes requested by North Side families in the final quarter of this year. Progress is being made and we give God the thanks and glory! Thank you for your continued support of this vital local mission!

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES** - Katie Jackson, Former Director of Children's Ministries

Dear Munsey,

How can I ever express my gratitude for you?!?! Thank you so much for how you have loved me and my family these past 14 years! You all are near and dear to my heart. I am forever grateful for my time serving on staff at Munsey! I hope to periodically hear from you all and I promise not to be a stranger to this church! Until I see you again, I would like to leave you with this song:

### **MY FRIEND**

*My friend I think of you daily,  
Because I care and it's true,  
Though we've shared a lot together,  
It's very rare that I see you.*

*And I want you to know that God loves you,  
And that I love you, too.  
And that even if we're hardly ever near,  
I'm talking to Him about you.  
And I'll be praying for you every morning,  
As I start off the day with the Lord.  
I'll be praying that you're walking with Jesus,  
And abiding in His Word.*

*For you see this Jesus of Nazareth,  
He means everything to me.  
For He has taken my life,  
And He has freed my soul,  
And He has calmed an angry sea.*

*And I want you to know that God loves you,  
And that I love you, too.*

*And that even if we're hardly ever near,  
I'm talking to Him about you.  
And I'll be praying for you every morning,  
As I start off the day with the Lord.  
I'll be praying that you're walking with Jesus,  
And abiding in His Word.*

*Well, I don't know when I'll see you again,  
A month a year, or maybe more.  
But if your heart belongs to the Savior,  
I'll see you in the sky if not before.*

*And I want you to know that God loves you,  
And that I love you, too.  
And that even if we're hardly ever near,  
I'm talking to Him about you.  
And I'll be praying for you every morning,  
As I start off the day with the Lord.  
I'll be praying that you're walking with Jesus,  
And abiding in His Word.*

**Munsey Church will always be in my prayers!  
With Love, Katie Jackson**

## **YOUTH MINISTRIES** - Amy Brown, Former Director of Youth Ministries

All I can say is thank you! I thank you for all you have done for me throughout my time at Munsey. I have learned and grown so much. If you didn't know, I am a preacher's kid. I have been in many churches over the years. Munsey feels like a home church to me. This church is full of kind - hearted people who are using their gifts to serve the Lord. I thank you for your support and your friendship. I will miss you all very much! I will be praying for you through this transition and wish Munsey nothing but the best. God bless you and I love you all!

## MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT (FEATURED ON THE COVER)

Munsey Church has blessed four generations of our family (Bill and Jerry Sue Patterson; Michael Scalf and Trish Patterson; Isaiah and Allie Greer; Sarah and Oliver Greer). Munsey and its congregation have played a role in each of our lives throughout various stages. Through the major milestones of life – baptisms, weddings, and funerals – our Church has celebrated, comforted, and been present for each member of our family. More importantly, Munsey helps us find those moments of the divine in ordinary moments, through warm welcomes on a Sunday morning, community in Sunday School classes, or through sermons that expand our understanding of God.

Our family appreciates Munsey's emphasis on service and ministry. Through different avenues, our family has been able to serve over several decades at Munsey. From Jerry Sue formerly teaching at Munsey preschool, Trish serving as a previous director of children's ministries and now teaching classes, Michael having served on the praise band, Isaiah volunteering with youth, or Allie serving with children's ministry, our lives and our faith have been enriched through Munsey's ministries.

We find great peace in knowing that our youngest generation, Sarah and Oliver, are being raised and supported in an environment where God's love is so clearly on display. And every generation is excited to continue inviting, caring, growing and serving as part of the body of Christ at Munsey Church in 2025.

## FESTIVE CHRISTMAS SWEATER DAY



## FESTIVE CHRISTMAS SWEATER DAY (CONT.)



## GINGER BREAD BASH



## JOB POSTINGS

### DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

We are seeking a full-time Director of Children's Ministries to serve in ministry to children from birth through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The ideal candidate will exhibit a love of children, families, and servant leaders, and will encourage children in the congregation and community to grow in faith as Christian disciples. Applicants must be mature and committed disciples of Christ and team players with good organization and communication skills. A Bachelor's degree is required, with a degree in Education or Religion and at least three years of experience in Children's Ministries preferred. Submit resume, cover letter, and statement of faith to: [employment@munsey.org](mailto:employment@munsey.org). Job description is available upon request.

### DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MIINISTRIES

Munsey Memorial United Methodist Church seeks a full-time Director of Youth Ministries to serve in ministry to students in grades 7-12, also assisting with grades 5-6, alongside the Director of Children's Ministries. Desired applicant will focus on programs and relational ministry with students. A Bachelor's degree is required, with a degree in Education or Religion and previous youth ministry experience preferred. Submit resume, cover letter, and statement of faith to: [employment@munsey.org](mailto:employment@munsey.org). Job description is available upon request.

## WORSHIP AT MUNSEY– JANUARY SERMON SCHEDULE

### JANUARY 5

*"The Mission of the Magi"*

**11:00am Sanctuary**  
Rev. Dr. Kip Laxson  
preaching

**11:00am Journey**  
Rev. Beth Sullivan  
preaching

**9:00am Open Door**  
Anthony Jackson  
preaching

### JANUARY 12

*"Leap Before You Look!"*

**11:00am Sanctuary**  
Rev. Dr. Kip Laxson  
preaching

**11:00am Journey**  
Rev. Beth Sullivan  
preaching

**9:00am Open Door**  
Anthony Jackson  
preaching

### JANUARY 19

*"Looking for a City"*

**11:00am Sanctuary**  
Rev. Dr. Kip Laxson  
preaching

**11:00am Journey**  
Katie Jackson  
preaching

**9:00am Open Door**  
Anthony Jackson  
preaching

### JANUARY 26

*"How Do You Spell Faith?"*

**11:00am Sanctuary**  
Rev. Dr. Kip Laxson  
preaching

**11:00am Journey**  
Rev. Beth Sullivan  
preaching

**9:00am Open Door**  
Anthony Jackson  
preaching

## WORSHIP SERVICES AT MUNSEY

- ◆ **The 11:00am Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary** features traditional music with the Chancel Choir.
- ◆ **The 11:00am Journey Worship in the Christian Life Center Gym** features contemporary music with the Praise Band.
- ◆ **The 9:00am Open Door Worship is held in the Melting Pot** and is our most informal service. Coffee and pastries will be available from **8:30-9:00am**.

Holy Communion is traditionally offered the first Sunday of the month in all worship services.

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