



THE WITNESS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1610 PRINCE ST., CONWAY, ARKANSAS, 72034

The Story of Jesus in a Nativity

From Sandra Humphreys:

If you have not had an opportunity to check out the Nativity sets on display in the windows of the church library in the Sanctuary building, you should make that opportunity happen. Be sure and take your children, as there are several sets that will interest them.

All of the sets were loaned to the library to be on display during Advent. It turns out that Pastor Dede began a sermon series at the same time. As you look and think of these sets, please remember what Pastor Dede has emphasized during these sermons – NOTHING can replace Jesus.

As you observe the sets, please notice that Christians around the world have created some very creative and artistic designs to help us grasp the meaning, as Pastor Dede has said, "It all comes down to Jesus." In each set in our display and any Nativity set you might see around your home or on display in other places, Jesus is always the center of the set, with Mary and Joseph, the three wisemen, the shepherds, and the animals always focusing on Jesus -- the King of Kings.

From the Collection of
Frank and Sue Jones



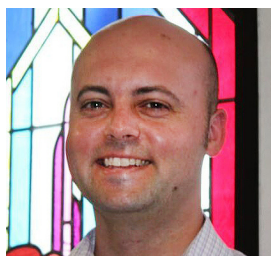
Our sets that have been loaned are a varied mix of traditional and non-traditional, but in each case, Jesus is

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'Season's Greetings': Expressing Goodwill

Many of you likely received cards, postcards, emails, or even seen signs of the traditional Christmas holiday greeting, "Season's Greetings." It is our expression of goodwill to all we encounter throughout this holiday season, although it is not really an expression we say all that often anymore. Rather we see it around us on mailers and signs. More often than not, we may say or hear "Happy Holidays" or "Merry Christmas." Nonetheless, whether we are talking about these two expressions or "Season's Greetings," each of them carry with them the same feeling of well-wishing. As we encounter people throughout this season, we express our desire that they have a blessed and wonderful season.

Yet, "Season's Greetings" carries with it a connotation of welcome and hospitality. Whereas "Merry Christmas" is often used as people depart, "Season's Greetings" is an expression which



The Rev.
Nathan
Kilbourne

may be used as an introductory phrase upon encountering another during this holiday. While it may seem awkward because the expression is less verbal than it used to be, imagine encountering someone and saying, "Season's Greetings." Such a greeting invites the other into the joy, love, peace, and hope of this season. It invites another into our experience. In this special season, a season in which we celebrate God's penultimate gift of love in Jesus Christ, may you be welcomed into this season with me.

In so many ways, our family has

experienced "Season's Greetings" from you as we prepare to return to Conway FUMC. From cards, conversations, facebook messages, emails, and more, we have felt extremely welcomed.

Lynn, myself, Eleanor and Lydia are excited to return and serve Christ with you. I can't express in words how honored I am to be appointed as your senior pastor. Having known of your continued work in Christ as Lynn served as the associate and then your continued faithfulness as Pastor Michael led and guided you, I'm honored to serve Christ with you. Even more so, having experienced the welcome we have even before our arrival, I can see the loving hospitality that is at the heart of this congregation.

Such is a sign of your welcoming of Christ into your lives. There are so many things to celebrate, remember,

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(at left) from the Collection of Frank and Sue Jones.

(at right) a beautiful camel from a set loaned by Karen Jumper.



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the centerpiece. The sets we have range from a Fisher Price Nativity set from the toy chest of Ella and Ruby Jones to a beautiful hand-painted set loaned to us by Karen Jumper. Karen's set is a 14-piece set that was hand painted, and you must pay attention to the size and beauty of each piece. The camels are outstanding!

Pebble Sutherland graciously loaned four sets from the Sue and Frank Jones Collection. Sue and Frank would be delighted knowing the people of their beloved church would enjoy Christmas with their sets on display. The white with gold trim set was hand painted for Sue by a church member in Carthage, Missouri, where Frank served as pastor for several years. The other sets loaned by Pebble are traditional – some with several pieces and one which features a more traditional figurine of Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and an angel above the manger. The Native American set with a teepee as the manger will be enjoyed by the children. The commonly found lamb is not in this set, but a bison can be found next to the brave.

Carole Teague has on display a set from Chile. All the pieces are of one color but the story is the same. The lambs in this set are so sweet!

The most unusual is the brass set loaned by Harold Henderson. The set is made up of the manger, Mary and Joseph, baby Jesus, and two animals. The most unusual design is the cradle holding baby Jesus – unusual but gorgeous.

Randy Crowell brought a traditional set which is small but has beautiful colors. He also has a lovely set with a beautiful manger and the characters are all the same color. Betty Diehl's set is a large set with beautiful colors and brings to life the story we all love and cherish. David Adcock donated a set that children will love. The characters are all young children portraying characters from the story of Jesus.

Katherine Butt loaned two sets – one from Switzerland and one from Tanzania. The set from Tanzania is made from ebony wood. This set is intriguing but it brings up a lot of discussion of the vast difference to what we are accustomed. Yet again, the story is the same no matter where we are – in Conway or Northern Africa. Isn't that what Christianity is about? Believing in the story that Jesus was born in a manger and became the King of Kings around the world, and it is fine that we are all different but believe the same?!

The Swiss set has some different characters we never see in a traditional set. There are certainly the characters we are all familiar with when we consider Nativity sets. In addition to the usual, there are a number of people with each carrying something different to Jesus. These characters are all dressed in clothing typically found in Switzerland. During a discussion of this set, one church member stated how wonderful it would be if all who saw this set could focus on Jesus first and why he was born, and then focus on the fact that each of us have been given gifts we can use to glorify and honor him.

What is the gift you hope to use in your life that will glorify Jesus and will enable you to be the Light that leads others to the King of Kings?

Nativity Set for Children to Touch

There is a nativity set on display in the church library loaned by Joan and Paul Noesser. She chose this set to be where the children could not only see it, but she wants them to pick up the pieces, move them around, and talk about each with their parents. How fun will that be?! The library is on the first floor of the Sanctuary. building.



Part of a nativity made of ebony wood, loaned by Katherine Butt.

Join Us For **S'MORE**
Hiking Sat, Jan 7th As We
Explore Bluffton Preserve In
The Ozark Mountains!
(yes, we will make s'mores)




Notes from the Church Library

We have a lot of Christmas puzzles in different sizes in the church library. Check them out for a little family fun. Please don't take more than two at a time so several families can have an opportunity to work a puzzle.

Thanks to Ed Spears, we now have the display lights working over the window display. The Nativity sets are really showing up because of Ed and him constantly doing things to make it all better.

Conway First United Methodist Church Advent and Christmas 2022

1610 Prince St.

501-329-3801

Christmas Eve Worship

Carols, Candles and Communion

11 a.m. in the Sanctuary

4 p.m. in the Great Hall

7 p.m. in the Sanctuary



Christmas Day

10 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Featuring music from a variety of the church's
choirs and bands.

No Sunday school and no Middle Grounds.



New Year's Day

10 a.m. in the Great Hall

Featuring a message from Garrett Pritchard,
CIYouth Intern

No Sunday school and no Middle Grounds.

Birthday Reception Set Jan. 8 for Sam Teague

You're invited to help Sam Teague celebrate his 90th birthday at a come-and-go reception on Sunday, Jan. 8. The reception will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Teague home at 125 Grapevine in Conway. Sam's 90th birthday is Jan. 9. He requests no gifts, please.

End-of-Year Giving and Office Hours

For gifts to be deductible for the 2022 tax year, they must be in the church office by noon Saturday, Dec. 31, or postmarked by that date.

The church office will be closed Monday, Dec. 26, and Tuesday, Dec. 27. Office hours will be 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 28, and Thursday, Dec. 29, and 9 a.m. to noon Friday, Dec. 30.

The office will also be closed Monday, Jan. 3.

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and anticipate during this season. But one thing I'm always reminded of is that we are called to welcome Christ to our world during this season. God comes to us in such a vulnerable state; such is a sign of God's trust of us and our own hospitality. And as we welcome Christ in this season into our lives, hospitality becomes a natural, normal characteristic in our lives. As such, I know you have welcomed Christ because of your welcome of us.

Love certainly grows among you and in you.

All said, we are excited to join you as we continue to welcome Christ with you and to express hospitality to the community of Conway. There are people all around that are in desperate need of the same welcome as you have given us. What a pleasure it will be to offer hospitality alongside you all!

Season's Greetings!

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In Honor & In Memory

In memory of **Sue Jones** by: John & Claudia Courtway

In memory of **Ben Montgomery** by: Sam & Carole Teague, Martha Bumpers,
Jamie Bird, Randy Crowell

In memory of **David Funkhouser** by: Martha Bumpers, Jamie Bird

In memory of **Bill Jacob** by: Martha Bumpers

In honor of **Pastor Michael Roberts** by: Clint Johnson, Chris & Kathy Cooper,
Pam Wren

In honor of **Pastor Dede Roberts** by: Chris & Kathy Cooper, Pam Wren, Bill &
Janie Craddock

In honor of **Kish Jones** by: Charles Pittman

In honor of **Kisha Bumpers** by: Richard, Leigh, Eliza & Finn Counts

In honor of **Jason Saugey** by: Bill & Janie Craddock

Sunday Worship

In-person:

8:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary
9:05 a.m. in the Great Hall
11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

9:05 and 11 a.m.
services are
livestreamed.

[www.facebook.com/
conwayfirstumc](http://www.facebook.com/conwayfirstumc)

First United Methodist Church Staff Directory

Interim Senior Pastor — Dede Roberts
Dir., Music/Worship Ministries — Jason Saugey
Co-Dir., Children's Ministries — Catherine Gatlin
Co-Dir., Children's Ministries -- Jules Koen
Director, Lay Ministries — Kisha Bumpers
Director, Youth Ministries — Zach Schrick
Director, MidYouth Ministries — Sandra King
Campus Dir., Wesley Foundation -- Amy Shores

Assoc. Dir., Music (Praise Band) -- Stuart Holt
Assoc. Dir., Music (Children) — Linda Ball
Church Administrator — Jill Hankins
Business Assistant — Todd Burris
Supervisor, Hospitality Ministries — Ed Spears
Financial Assistant — Laura Bounds
Communications Assistant — Colleen Holt
Kitchen Coordinator — Kathleen Caruthers

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