

The Connection Point

December 2023 - Vol. 1, No. 12



These are the Days - January 2024 Women's Retreat!

As an Ordained Deacon in the United Methodist Church and a Co-Founder of Mosaic Realty Group, Sarah has dedicated more than 15 years to serving communities and guiding individuals through significant life transitions. With a heart for ministry and a keen eye for real estate, she has become a beacon of support for families and seniors, helping them navigate the complexities of change with grace and resilience.



At the Women's Retreat, she invites you to explore the present joy that life offers, amidst the muddle and beauty of our everyday existence. Sarah aims to inspire and teach others about embracing life with joy, being present in the moment, and seizing life-giving opportunities. Her personal motto, "In the middle, muck, and mess of it all, joy is the affirmation that the truest thing about our lives is that we are loved," encapsulates her philosophy. Her message is one of hope, resilience, and the beauty of embracing who we are today.

In addition to Sarah's message, we have six different small group sessions to choose from, including sessions on parenting, Enneagrams, spiritual yoga practices, photography and more, as well as an optional self-defense course led by Bill. Watch the Fellowship website and Facebook page for more details!

These Are The Days
2024 Women's Retreat
Saturday, January 20 | 9 AM - 3 PM
Fellowship UMC, Trophy Club

Registration:
 \$30 by Dec. 31
 \$40 beginning Jan. 1

What's Inside:



Isaiah 'twas Foretold It

by Scott Scheetz

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Upcoming Events:

Lessons and Carols

Sunday, Dec. 10, 2023

4 pm in the Sanctuary

Youth Fundraiser:

Gift Wrapping &

Babysitting

Sunday, Dec. 17, 2023

2-6 pm

Christmas Eve Services

Sunday, Dec. 24, 2023

5 & 7 pm in the Sanctuary

These Are the Days

January 2024

Women's Retreat

Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024

A Note from Pastor Bill

What a year we have had! December is already here and I often spend time in December looking back and reflecting on the journey that brought us to December. This 2023 year started off in the most heart-breaking way — flooding on Christmas Eve forced us to cancel Christmas Eve worship services. We were forced to make very difficult decisions, raise an overwhelming \$25k deductible, make repairs additional to that flooding that the insurance wouldn't provide, relocate our entire Fellowship Friends Preschool classes to other areas of the building, responded to a lightning strike nearby that crippled our audio/video and lighting in the sanctuary, and make additional repairs to the frequent air conditioning failures, etc. I could go on and on and on, but you know because you have lived it too! We have had so many obstacles over this past year that it would be understandable to retreat and stop being who we are in our community. Churches faces these overwhelming obstacles often step way back and isolate themselves from their mission to the community, understandably so.

But that is not who we are! We are Fellowship United Methodist Church and generations leading to us decided to build this church on top of a hill with its steeple and cross rising up into the sky so that all may know we are a beacon of hope and grace in this community. As we reflect back on 2023, let's celebrate how we have overcome these many obstacles. Let's celebrate how we have grown our community-wide missions and how we continue to be that beacon of God's hope and grace to this community. Here are a few ways we have accomplished this in 2023:

CCW - Creative Christian Women

- Hundreds of Stockings, Tote Bags, Prayer Shawls, and other items have been made to benefit local battered women's shelters and those who are ill and sick.



Connection with Local Schools - including Byron Nelson H.S.,

- Thousands of Snack Sacks have been provided for weekend distribution to elementary students living in poverty situations that may go hungry over the weekend. We Average about 75 snack sacks per week.
- Our youth recently prepared over 200 snack sacks for the Thanksgiving holiday.
- We prepared several Thanksgiving meals, complete with Turkeys, that went home with these students in need.
- Music Ministry w/ Byron Nelson H.S. - choral scholars & hosting Byron Nelson H.S. music programs in our community.

Roanoke Senior Center

- We feed senior citizens the 2nd Wednesday and have added the 5th Wednesday of every month.
- Many, many desserts have been provided and smiles shared as we have served some of our most vulnerable persons.

Additional Ministries in our community:

- Betsy has launched a new ministry called Fellowship Moms Connect. Moms in our community meet and engage in art and urban busy moms survival classes, such as preparing frozen meals for the family that can be thawed and cooked easily during the week when time is precious.
- Hundreds of lives have been saved through multiple blood donations at Fellowship UMC through Carter Blood Care on Sunday mornings.

- We have overcome the many obstacles facing BSA - Scouting Ministries and continue to be a host to not only a pack, two troops, our venturing crew, and we are now hosting district leadership actives here at Fellowship.

Connection with the LDS church in Trophy Club

- Joint venture - packed thousands of personal hygiene kits to benefit Cooke Children's Hospital and Rio Valley Relief Project.
- Upcoming Live Nativity - w/ LDS, Catholic Charities, and Roanoke Food Pantry where 2,500 have already reserved tickets.

Roanoke Food Pantry

- Thousands of pounds of food have been raised every day, every week, every month. Deliveries are made weekly, sometimes several times a week.
- We have increased the numbers of Christmas Angels on our angel tree and have already sold out all angels in only two weeks.
- Our Fellowship Friends Preschool continues a toy drive to benefit children in need selected through Roanoke Food Pantry.

Wow! There is actually much more that I could share. This gives you an idea of how we are impacting our community and being the hands and feet of Jesus to those in need.

It's completely understandable to celebrate surviving a year like 2023 that started off so poorly. After all, we are survivors! But we are much more than that! Let's intentionally target the weeks of December and celebrate who we really are! We are a family of faith that cannot be held down! We are a family that overcomes, perseveres, and conquers the obstacles that arise. We are a family that never loses sight of our mission of sharing God's love and grace. We make a difference in this world! We make a difference in our community! Truly, God is with us. We are Fellowship! Let's Celebrate!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Bill

Music Ministry

Isaiah 'twas Foretold It

by Scott Scheetz

The season of Advent is here. This is a time of expectation as we wait and prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth and the return of Christ at the Second Coming. One of my favorite Advent hymns is *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* which is found in our hymnals as number 216.

*Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming,
as those of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.*

This hymn was written sometime in 16th century Germany by an anonymous source. Its original title in German is "Es ist ein Ros entsprungen". The tune paired with this hymn shares the same name and was written in 1609 by German composer and organist, Michael Praetorius (1571-1621).

This beautiful hymn references the Old Testament prophecies of Isaiah.

*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of
Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.*

- Isaiah 11:1

The third line in the first stanza ("of Jesse's lineage coming") is a direct reference to Isaiah 11 and refers to the lineage of King David (Jesse being David's father), from which the Messiah would come. (See *Matthew Chapter 1 for the genealogy of Jesus all the way back to Abraham*)

*Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it,
the Virgin Mother kind.*



*To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Savior,
when half-gone was the night.*

The imagery of the rose has led to much discussion and speculation. The original text dates back to the 1580s. Some Catholics claim the focus of the hymn was originally on Mary, comparing Mary to the "mystical rose" in Song of Solomon 2:1. One source states that a monk in Trier found a blooming rose while walking in the woods on Christmas Eve, and that he placed this rose on the altar to the Virgin Mary. It has been suggested that at a later date, Protestants took the hymn and altered its focus from Mary to Jesus. Many works of medieval iconography depict the tree of Jesse as a rose plant, which adds weight to the argument that the rose is symbolizing Jesus.

The most common English translation of this hymn was done by Theodore Baker (1851-1934) in 1894. His translation of stanzas one and two are found in our hymnal. The third stanza comes from a stanza written in German by Friedrich Layritz (1808-1859) and translated by Harried Reynolds Kraugh (1845-1925) in 1875.

*O Flower, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispel in glorious splendor
the darkness everywhere.
True man yet very God,
from sin and death now save us,
and share our every load.*

This final stanza expands the flower imagery further and reminds us of Christ's purpose in coming to this earth. As we live in this time of uncertainty and hurt in the world, let us find comfort in the hope and anticipation of the celebration of Christ's birth and his return. Let us too like Christ, dispel in glorious splendor the darkness everywhere, and be a beacon of hope to those in need!

Children's Ministry



FELLOWSHIP MOMS CONNECT

Paint Party Fun!

Our November Fellowship Moms Connect event was a painting party. Wow! What a wonderful time we had painting together alongside our CCW Sisters. It was a night filled with art, cider, cookies and laughter. We sure have some creative women at Fellowship and it was a great way to start the week. Thanks to artist Cindy Perreira for guiding us through the adorable pumpkin themed project.



December Fellowship Moms Connect

Our next Coffee Chat will be on Wed., December 6 at 10am at Sip Stir Coffee House in Westlake. It will be lovely to slow down together before the busyness of the holidays.

HANGING OF THE GREENS SERVICE

December 3 is our Hanging of the Greens service at 11am. We hope you can join us! During a portion of the service, Ark Kids Families will be invited to help decorate a tree with ornaments. Mark your calendar!

DRAMA MINISTRY TEAM

On Wednesday Nights in December, Ark Kids have been learning all about puppetry! During Adventures in Drama, children learn basic puppetry techniques and create puppet plays. Our 4th-6th grade Drama Ministry team then integrate puppetry skills into the Childrens Chat lesson on Sunday Mornings. It is a joy to watch them bring the bible to life for our preschool-2nd graders!



PRESCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER NEEDED

Can you volunteer once or twice a month for 1 hour to bring the love of God to our littlest church goers? All curriculum is provided! Preschool Sunday School meets Sundays from 9-10am. JOIN OUR TEAM!

ARK KIDS DECEMBER WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEAL

On Wednesday, December 13 Ark Kids are combining with Youth to serve Nachos for the Wednesday Night meal. We will need help with ingredients, serving and cleaning up. There will be NO kid's drama classes that night since kids are helping clean and serve.

PRAYER BUDDY BULLETIN BOARD

Attention Prayer Buddies! I have created a permanent bulletin board for our program and the November letters are there for you to pick up. Every 3rd Sunday, I will attach that month's letters for you to pick up from the board (on the wall near the Children's Wing). Please make sure you place your letters in the Prayer Buddy Mailbox every month!



Youth Ministry



Dear Church Family,

Greetings from FTC Youth! We are excited to tell you about something special we did this month. We know that some children at school get free lunch because their families may need a little extra help. But on weekends, these kids might not have enough to eat at home. So, we decided to do something about it. We put together 200 bags of snacks, that we call "Snack Sacks." These aren't just regular snacks. They are full of good, healthy food that helps the children in need to have something to eat on Saturday and Sunday.

We thought a lot about what to put in each bag to make sure the kids would have enough to eat when they're not at school. It was a great joy for us to serve God, through helping others. We also want to say a big thank you to you, our church family. Your support makes it possible for us to do things like this. It's because of your kindness and help that we can reach out and make a difference in our community.

We hope our "Snack Sacks" project shows how important it is to help each other. If you want to join in or help out in any way, please do! We believe that when we all work together, we can make sure no child in our community goes hungry and every family feels cared for.

Thank you for always being there and for inspiring us to do good things.

With love and thanks,

The Youth Group 🌟🙌



Fellowship Friends Preschool

Our students had a great time in the month of November learning about sharing. We learned about how the pilgrim came to America and were challenged by this new land. We explored the importance of lending a helping hand to others in need. The types of foods that were available to eat and how they are different from what is available now.

Enjoyed sharing time with our families as they came into our classroom to share in our Thanksgiving luncheon that we provided for our students. Parents were so generous in their contributions to our feast. The children enjoyed Chick-Fil-a nuggets, macaroni and cheese and other goodies. They made place mats and special Thanksgiving projects to share with family.

On Discovery day in November, we learned about Nocturnal animals and cooking science. We made butter, mozzarella cheese, and even made bird feeders for our feathered friends. Did you know that there is iron in cereal, we did, and tested to see if we could move it with a magnet.

We invite you all to join us for our Christmas program. Tuesday December 19th or Wednesday December 20th

at 10:30 a.m. in the church sanctuary where our students will perform a light hearted Christmas program filled with singing and dancing performed by our student dancers.



Registration for currently enrolled students (and siblings) is scheduled to begin on January 24 and 25, 2024 with packets going home that day with students. Registration deadline for current students is due February 15, 2024. Former students and church members can register their children on February 20, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.. Open enrollment for new students begins at 7:30 a.m. on February 21, 2024.

Our school will be closed December 21st to January 9th. We want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year. Thank you for your continued support of our ministry.

- Barbara Rich-Clark

A Note from Pastor Bob

Our Sunday School class has been using a Great Courses video about the making of the New Testament Canon. We are about to conclude that video. The next to last presentation, though, was titled “The Importance of Interpretation”. In a study to learn how our Bible comes to us, having to have a lecture about interpretation is instructive to adults coping with the media and social media on the internet’s information. Much of it is conflicting. But the upshot of it all is that each of us comes to any body of information with our own experiences and conclusions from those experiences. So how do these information machines fit in with you? Who do you authorize to give you the information you need to function in today’s world?

Last month I talked a bit about Christian Nationalism. It was presented that the US was not founded as a Christian nation, and that the Constitution has two references to religion, neither of which addressed the primary mode the founders used. This month I would like to discuss the concept of separation of church and state.

Did the American founders pioneer the concept of separation of the church and state? Another mantra of the Christian nationalists is that there is no Constitutional limitation that would keep the US from establishing a national religion. Our founders absolutely were intentional in NOT making a religion a state responsibility. Just look at the countries the founders came from, and one can note the issues religion and politics had raised in almost everyone’s nation of origin.

At most the founders were hoping for toleration. Being tolerated was not the founder’s goal. Instead, they were the first to try to craft the First Amendment, so that there would be an “official distance” between religion and government. The founders Jefferson and Madison were keen students of history. They were

aware of the hundreds of years of church state union that led to violence, terror, torture, and even war!



In fact, Madison, in 1785 wrote a treatise that noted the on-going issues of this type. He pointed out that when policy enforcers would ease up on legally established rules about people not in the “in” group religiously, social and political tensions were considerably lower to everyone’s benefit. Therefore, he fought and eventually won the debate, and no religion was established nationally.

Think about it. You may read of the vacant churches in Europe. A place where many of the founders either came from (or their families immigrated from). To a great extent that might be the issue. Most of the European churches were national (or the local royalty’s) directed churches. Some are vacant or severely struggling. But here in the US, where for over 200 years the separation principle was maintained...and we have over 2000 differing denominations, differences within them!

One wonders why people struggle so about the separation of church and state that has established a religiously vibrant nation! I think that this is a problem with the Christian nationalists...they want Christianity...but only their kind of religion can be the true faith! Read the first paragraph again...we all come to this issue with our experience. I like the fact that we are free to worship as we choose without a moderator overlooking our faith expressed.

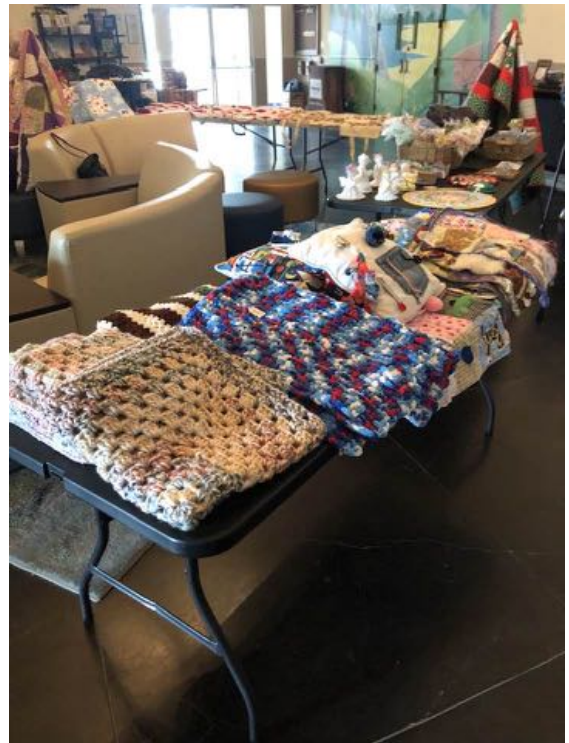
YIC, Bob

Adult Ministry

Creative Christian Women

CCW ladies would like to thank everyone for their support and participation in our recent sale. All the money collected goes toward purchasing supplies for our ministries for the upcoming year. We appreciate each of you.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!





Upcoming Wednesday Night Dinners

Come for food and Fellowship in Legends Hall every Wednesday Night during the school year. Dinner is served from 5:00-6:30.

December 6th - Picnic/Sandwich Potluck

Come bring your picnic foods or sandwiches and share it with others!

December 13th - Nacho Night

Hosted by our Children's and Youth Ministries

December 20th & 27th - NO WEDNESDAY NIGHT ACTIVITIES - Merry Christmas!

Missions Opportunities

Please contact Karen, our office administrator (karen@fumctc.com | 817.430.1500) for information or ways to connect and serve

Snack Sack Donations

Food donations for children at Lakeview and Medlin schools. Please contact Ginger Dennie for more info at ginger@fumctc.com

Desserts for the Roanoke Senior Center

FUMC has partnered with the Roanoke Senior Center and provides desserts the 2nd Wednesday of each month. If you would like to partake, please donate desserts to the Roanoke Senior Center by 10:45 am on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

Roanoke Food Pantry Donations

This partnership helps those in need right here in our own community. Please see the back page for this month's needs.

Pop Tabs for the Ronald McDonald House

The pop tabs go to help fund the Ronald McDonald House in Dallas. This 13 bedroom house provides housing for traveling families who have a sick child being treated at a nearby hospital. Pop tabs are being collected on the Missions Bookcase in the narthex.





How you can help serve our community needs!
Purchase any of the items below:

CANNED FRUIT

PASTA SAUCE

JELLO

RICE-A-RONI

KETCHUP, MUSTARD, & MAYO

Bring them to church and place them in the labeled bins in the narthex. Deliveries will be made to the Roanoke Food Pantry throughout the week.

Thank you for your generosity!

Recurring Weekly Events:

Sunday

- 9:00 am Modern Worship
- 11:00 am Traditional Worship
- 4:00-6:00 pm Middle School Youth Group
- 6:00-8:00 pm High School Youth Group

Monday

- 10:00 am Creative Christian Women

Tuesday

- 6:45 am Men's Bible Study (at Dove Creek Cafe)
- 8:30 am Men's Bible Study (at Dove Creek Cafe)
- 7:00 Handbell Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday (August -May)

- 5:00-6:30 pm Wednesday Night Dinner
- 5:30-6:15 pm Children's Bible Study
- 6:00-7:00 pm Adult Bible Study
- 6:15-7:00 pm Children's Drama Team
- 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal