

# Fellowship United Methodist Church

## The Connection Point

January 2024 - Vol. 2, No. 1



What an amazing and busy year 2023, and particularly this fall season has been for the Music Ministry here at Fellowship! Last June we said goodbye to three of our four Choral Scholars as they graduated and went to college. This past August, we welcomed three new Choral Scholars and it has been such a blessing to have them in our Sanctuary choir and leading us in worship each week.



*Bethel, Belle, Jackson, and Casey*

*(article continued on page 4)*

### Upcoming Events:

**These Are the Days  
January 2024  
Women's Retreat**  
Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024

**Mardi Gras Celebration**  
February 13, 2024  
5 pm - Legends' Hall



**Ash Wednesday  
Organ Recital and Worship  
Service**  
February 14, 2024  
6:30 pm - Sanctuary

## A Note from Pastor Bill

Here we are, welcoming a new year, full of possibility and hope, perhaps a little anxiety mixed in. How will 2024 be different from 2023? What will Fellowship do that will be new in 2024? Will we be able to continue the wonderful programming we currently share? In 2023, we saw some new ways we interacted with our community - Live Nativity, increase focus on Roanoke Food Pantry, etc. What will be next? Will we have enough to share with our community? The first Sunday of January is Epiphany Sunday, where we honor the visit of the 3 magi bringing gifts for Jesus. Sometimes it seems that the gifts we bring to Jesus are so very small and won't be enough to affect change in our world. This reminds me of a story I once heard called The Christmas Dime.

*Bobby was getting cold sitting out in his backyard in the snow. Bobby didn't wear boots; he didn't like them, he didn't own any anyways. The thin sneakers he wore had a few holes in them and they did a poor job of keeping out the cold. Bobby had been in his backyard for about an hour and try as he might, he couldn't come up with an idea for his mother's Christmas gift. He shook his head as he thought "this is useless, even if I do come up with an idea, I don't have any money to spend."*

*Ever since his father had passed away three years ago, the family of five had struggled. It wasn't because his mother didn't care or try, because she did but there just never seemed to be enough. She worked nights at the general store downtown but the small wage she was earning could only be stretched so far.*

*What the family lacked in money and other material things they more than made up for in love and family unity. Bobby had two older and one younger sister, who ran the house in their mother's absence. All three of his sisters had already made amazing looking gifts for their mother. Somehow it just wasn't fair. Here it was Christmas Eve and he had nothing. Bobby's heart sank. What was he to do?*



*Wiping a tear from his eye, Bobby kicked the snow and started to walk down to the street where the shops and stores were. It wasn't easy being six without a father especially when he needed a man to talk to, Bobby was practically raised by all girls and sometimes he wished for a male role model in his life just to talk to and maybe pass the baseball back and forth with. Bobby walked from shop to shop looking into each uniquely decorated window, everything seemed so beautiful but yet so out of reach.*

*It was starting to get dark, Bobby turned to walk home when suddenly his eyes caught the glimmer of the setting sun's rays reflecting off of something along the curb. He reached down and discovered a shiny dime. Never before has someone felt as wealthy as Bobby felt at that moment.*

*As he held his new-found treasure, a warmth spread throughout his entire body and he walked into the first store he saw. His enthusiasm soon turned cold when the salesperson told him that he couldn't buy anything with only one small dime.*

*He then saw a flower shop and went inside to wait in line. When the shop owner asked if he could help him, Bobby presented his dime and asked if he could buy just one flower for his mother's Christmas gift? The store owner looked at Bobby and his ten cent offering.*

*Then he put his hand on Bobby's shoulder and said to him, "you just wait here and I'll see what I can do for you." As Bobby waited he stared at all the gorgeous flowers and even though he was a boy he could see why his mother and sisters liked them so much.*

*The sound of the last customer leaving jolted Bobby back into reality. All alone in the shop Bobby began to feel lonely and apprehensive. Finally the owner came out and moved to the counter.*

There, before Bobby's eyes, lay twelve long stem, red roses, with leaves of green and tiny white flowers all tied together with a big silver bow. Bobby's heart was filled with trepidation when the owner picked them up and put them in a long white box.

"That'll be ten cents young man". The shop owner said, reaching out his hand for the dime. Slowly Bobby moved his hand to give the man his dime. Could this be true? No one else would give him anything for his dime!

Sensing the boy's reluctance, the shop owner added," I just happened to have some roses on sale for ten cents a dozen. Would you like them? This time Bobby didn't hesitate, and when the man placed the long box into his hands he knew it was true. Walking out the door that the owner was holding for Bobby, he heard the shopkeeper say "Merry Christmas son."

As he returned inside, the shop keeper's wife walked out. "Who were you talking to back there and where are the roses you were fixing? Staring out the window, and blinking the tears from his own eyes, he replied. "A strange thing happened to me this morning. While I was setting up things to open the shop. I sensed the need to set aside a dozen of my best roses for a special gift. I wasn't sure if I had just completely lost my mind or what but I set them aside anyway.

Then just a few minutes ago, a little boy came into the shop and wanted to buy a flower for his mother with one small dime. When I looked at him I saw myself, many

years ago. I too, was a poor boy with nothing to buy my mother a Christmas gift. A bearded man, whom I never knew, stopped me on the street and told me he wanted to give me ten dollars. The shop owner and his wife hugged each other tightly and as they stepped into the bitter cold air, they somehow didn't feel cold at all.

I feel at times that what I have to offer the world is so very small. Certainly, our small and humble church - Fellowship, would not be able to make much of a difference in this world. We should not discount the movement of God's miraculous grace in this world! God can and will accomplish the most amazing things in and through Fellowship and each one of us. Bring those gifts, skills, abilities, and talents, even though we feel it is not much to give, and see the amazing things God can do! We are rich beyond measure - rich in God's love and grace. Let's pay it forward!

I can't wait for the new year and the amazing things God will do in our community through Fellowship UMC. We are family! We are Fellowship!

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Bill

# Music Ministry

(Continued from page 1)

The choral scholar program is supported by your generous donations throughout the year and at our *Music at Fellowship* concert series. We were blessed to host the Dallas Recorder Society in concert this past fall, as well as an organ duet recital showcasing the mural in our children's wing, and our annual Lessons & Carols last month.



I am so excited that our handbell choir is back and ringing. Half of them had never played handbells before this fall and have picked it up so quickly. I was very impressed with them ringing in worship only 5 weeks in!



It's also been fantastic to have both the Sanctuary Choir and Handbell choir premiere some of my new compositions written for them!



We were blessed this Christmas Eve by the wonderful music from Serenata Strings and our Sanctuary choir.

We've got some amazing music coming up this spring as part of our *Music at Fellowship* concert series that you don't want to miss! We kick off the spring semester with an Ash Wednesday organ concert on February 14th at 6:30 pm. Next is our annual Good Friday oratorio featuring our Sanctuary Choir and soloists! (Keep an eye out for our March newsletter to learn more about the piece they will be performing!) Then in April, we will have a Hymn Festival on the theme of God's Creation. The season will end with a final concert in May. Stay tuned for more info!

If you are interested in choir or handbells, we would love to have you be a part of this wonderful community. We have a spot for you. Both ensembles are open to anyone of any skill level! Whether you are a seasoned musician, or brand new, we want you to come be a part of the fun! Email me at [scott@fumctc.com](mailto:scott@fumctc.com), and we'll get you connected!

As Psalm 100 says: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing."

Soli Deo gloria  
- Scott Scheetz

# Children's Ministry



## Hanging of the Greens Service THANK YOU!

Well done decorating the tree during our Hanging of the Greens services on Sunday. I received WONDERFUL feedback about the participation of the children in the service.

## Fellowship Moms Connect

In the midst of the hectic holiday season, Fellowship Moms took a few minutes to meet for a coffee chat. What a blessing the moms of Fellowship are!

## Lessons and Carols

On Sunday, December 10 many Ark Kids Families enjoyed attending Lessons and Carols in the sanctuary. It was a great way to ring in the season. As always, we are thankful for Scott Scheetz and his music ministry leadership.

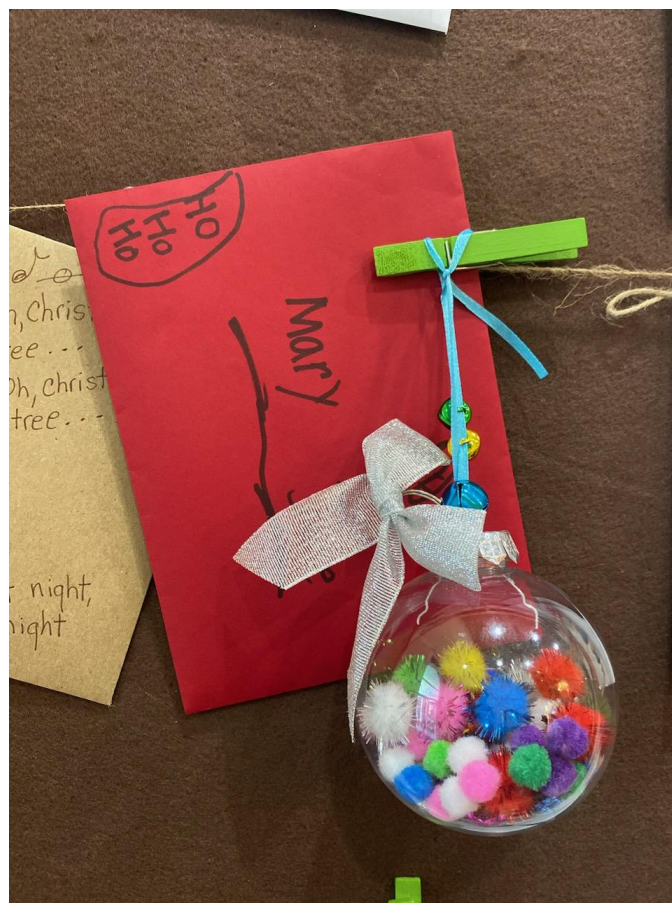
## Wednesday Nights at Fellowship

Our Wednesday nights in December were filled with food, fellowship and laughter. We made puppets one week, provided a delicious Nacho dinner another week and even took time to create Christmas Cards for Nursing Home residents. Great job Ark Kids!



## Prayer Buddies

Prayer buddies are doing a WONDERFUL job writing to each other. The bulletin board has been filled with letters, ornaments and is joyful to behold. The third Sunday of every month is Prayer Buddy Mail Delivery Day.



## Nursery and Sunday School Teachers...WE THANK YOU

Finally, a huge THANK YOU to Ms. Ann and Amy for their devotion to the children of Fellowship. Your consistent presence on Sunday mornings is a GIFT.

# Youth Ministry



Dear Church Family,

As we wrap up another fantastic year of youth ministry, our hearts are overflowing with joy and gratitude. Our end-of-year ice skating party wasn't just about gliding on the ice; it was a celebration of the bonds we've built throughout the year. With laughter echoing across the rink and the crisp winter air nipping at our noses, we shared not just great food but also great fellowship.

This year has been an amazing journey for all of us in the youth group. We've grown together, not only in our faith but also as a close-knit community. The support and love we've received from our church family have been nothing short of amazing. It's this unwavering support that makes every gathering, every event, and every moment together so special.

As we bid farewell to this year, our hearts are filled with excitement and anticipation for what the next year holds. We are so blessed to be part of such a loving and nurturing church family. The memories we've made are treasures we'll carry forever, and we can't wait to create more in the coming year.

To all our youth group members, volunteers, and our dear church family: thank you for making this year truly unforgettable. Here's to another year of faith, fun, and fellowship!

With love and blessings,

FTC Youth





## Fellowship Friends Preschool

Our students had a great month of learning about the birth of Jesus. We shared in the joy of the season and made fantastic memories along the way. Our parents enjoyed some time with the children at their classroom parties and our Christmas program, *The Sounds of Christmas*. We worked really hard to learn all the songs and speaking parts. Kudos to Mrs. Melissa York for all her hard work on this year's program. She did an amazing job of making sure that the children had a great time while learning and that our program was put together with love and the spirit of Jesus in our hearts.

Our staff and students participated in the toy drive for Roanoke Food Pantry and also in collecting pajamas for children and teens at local children's hospitals. The children were very excited to bring in these items and ring the bell that they had made a contribution to help someone in need. Thank you to our parents for all that you do to make this program a success every year.

We look forward to starting the new year with our students and staff. Our first event will be Muffins with Mom and Dad on January 17 & 18th, where our parents can come in and fellowship with the child's teacher and other parents over hot chocolate and muffins. Our

students will have an opportunity to learn about service to others in February as our Discovery Day students perform an entire day of service projects. If you see any need in the community that we can help with as a preschool, please reach out to us and we will be happy to help.



Registration for fall starts this month for returning students. 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 packets for current students (and siblings) are 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.

We wish everyone a joyous, healthy and Happy New Year.

Barbara Rich Clark  
Fellowship Friends Preschool



## A Note from Pastor Bob

I am enjoying writing these “columns”. Here we can discuss some of the misinformation of those persons that espouse “Christian Nationalism” in our cultural and political idea marketplace. Quite often the claim that “the wall of separation between church and state” is not part of the US Constitution, is a tenet that Christian Nationalists offer to counter points in a debate about why there should be limits on the role of religion in our politics.

What is meant by such a wall in civil discussion stems from a letter written by our third President (Thomas Jefferson) a couple of years into his first term as President. In our time, we tend to treat these issues as if they were settled long ago. But the US was a new country. And it was the world’s first Constitutional Republic! A new world product familiar with the religious fervor of their mostly European experiences of their families.

Jefferson received a letter from a Baptist association in Danbury, CN commenting on religious freedom. The Baptist’s were living under a form of “Congregationalist theocracy” in Connecticut. They knew Jefferson was an advocate of religious freedom so they wrote to voice their hope that his views would carry the day in all the states, so they could be free from their states’ established church. At that time the religious freedom clauses of the Constitution only applied to the federal government...any state was free to maintain an official church, and several states did so.

Jefferson replied in a letter dated January 1, 1802. His response was carefully crafted, as Jefferson was keenly aware that the contents of his letter would become public. So, he carefully responded in the letter as he thought it would enter the public domain as his views of religious liberties. As such he coordinated his letter with the Attorney General and other members of his cabinet.



In his letter, Jefferson agreed with the Baptists on the importance of religious freedom and tied that principle to church-state separation. His letter said, “Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of the government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’ thus building a wall of separation between Church & State.”

The President’s powerful metaphor (of the wall of separation of church and state) has rung down through the years since. The Christian Nationalist’s want to establish their own theocracy...thus they try to eliminate the “wall of separation” as an erroneous understanding of what our Constitution provides. To me, their argument is factually untrue...although not in the Constitution, the way it has worked for both government and for our various religious churches and denominations, for over 200 years, separation of church and state has earned our respect as a treasured message from a person very involved in the process of writing the Constitution and its Bill of Rights. Those that would ignore this tenet do not have the thrust of expanding rights and privileges to us all. I think they attempt to forget our history altogether.

Until we meet again...YIC, Bob

## Safety Response Team



Having a Response Team is new to FUMC, but safety and security has a long history in the church. In Ezekiel 33, God appoints Ezekiel as a watchman over the whole people of Israel. It becomes his duty to “blow the trumpet to warn the people” if he sees danger approaching. God is speaking metaphorically here, guarding against sinful ways, not actual invaders, but there are other verses that describe church security as an important ministry:

*Two hundred and twelve men were chosen as gatekeepers for the Tabernacle, entrusted to the office, in charge of the entrance to the house of the Lord as guards. They were stationed on the four sides: east, west, north, and south. (1 Chronicles 9:21-24)*

*Appoint the Levites over the Tabernacle; They shall take care of it and camp around it, keep guard over it... (Numbers 1:50-53)*

Our Response Team is not focused on keeping people out, but welcoming them in! We are a visible presence on Sunday mornings and other events, keeping a watchful eye, with skills to assist if needed. By having a visible safety team, FUMC is reassuring members

and visitors that we are prepared to take action, when necessary. By training together, the team builds skills related to first aid, weather events, fire, or other situations that can occur in or around the church.

*Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. (Romans 12:13)*

Church safety is more than “security,” it is a ministry, helping all who enter to feel safe and cared for while they are here. Like choir, youth programs, Sunday School or Creative Christian Women, this is another opportunity to contribute to the life of the church and serve the congregation.

As a member of the Response Team, you will be exposed to laws and concepts related to security and safety. Together, we will practice how to implement those practices if situations occur at the church. We work with the church Board to recommend policies, purchases and maintenance that keep the facility a welcoming and safe place to worship. Some members will specialize more on the security side, practicing with other team members in specific drills and procedures. Others can take courses in first aid, how to identify and assist those with health issues, and how to assist first responders when they arrive. If you find a seminar or program in the area that would prepare us to serve you better, please suggest it!

For more information about the Response Team, or to express interest in joining us, please contact Mark Kitchens, [mark.kitchens@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mark.kitchens@sbcglobal.net), (214) 542-5132. You are also welcome to ask a team member while we are on duty. We will be glad to meet you! If needed, we will introduce you to others who can answer your questions.

## 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.

**January 10 - NO WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES EXCEPT SANCTUARY CHOIR REHEARSAL**

**January 17 - Tex Mex Potluck**

Come bring your favorite Tex Mex food and share it with others!

**January 24 - Hamburgers & Hot Dogs**

Hosted by our Men's Bible Study Group

**January 31 - Italian Potluck**

Come bring your favorite Italian food and share it with others!

**February 7 - Soup Night**

Hosted by our Creative Christian Women

**Tuesday, February 13 - Mardi Gras Celebration**

No dinner on Wednesday, February 14th - 6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service

**February 21 - Sloppy Joe & Sides Potluck**

Come bring your sloppy joe sandwiches and sides, and share it with others!

**February 28**

Hosted by our local Boy Scout troops

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## Missions Opportunities



Please contact Karen, our office administrator ([karen@fumctc.com](mailto: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](mailto:ginger@fumctc.com)

### Desserts for the Roanoke Senior Center

FUMC has partnered with the Roanoke Senior Center and provides desserts the 2nd & 5th 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 & 5th 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 CHICKEN**

**JAM/JELLY  
(PLASTIC JARS PLEASE)**

**CANNED VEGETABLES  
(NO CORN, PEAS, OR GREEN BEANS)**

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
- 10:00 am Sunday School for all ages
- 11:00 am Traditional Worship
- 4:00-6:00 pm Middle School Youth Group
- 5:30-6:45 pm Adult Bible Study
- 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 pm 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