

DECEMBER 2022

# CROSSTALK

Centenary United Methodist Church

Luke 1:13 *"But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid..."* (NRSVUE)

Do not be afraid. A common refrain throughout scripture. God tells Abram not to be afraid when he makes a covenant with him, the angel tells Joshua do not be afraid when he is appointed to the lead the Israelites, Jesus tells the disciples not to be afraid when he walks on the water, and throughout the Christmas story the characters are told over and over again, do not be afraid.

But I'll be honest, not being afraid is much easier said than done. I'm sure that many of us would give anything to get rid of our fears, but "Do not be afraid" doesn't always cut it. There are so many unexpected storms that can sweep us off our feet.

We may have looming questions like: Will my health last? Will my marriage survive? How can I go on with the loss of a loved one? Will my child or grandchild make good choices? Will I be able to make my mortgage payments? Will there be enough food on the table? Fear can become a constant companion, robbing us of joy.

One of my favorite quotes about courage is by FDR, "Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear." When God says "Do not be afraid" throughout scripture, I think this is what he is getting at. Not that fear won't come, but that there is something greater than our fear. And for followers of Jesus, that "something" is a "someone".

Christmas is the time when we proclaim, even in the midst of our fears, even when it feels like we can't go on, that God is still with us. Do not be afraid because God is on the move, God is doing something new and we get to rest in the assurance that even as we walk with our fears, we do not walk alone.

Each Sunday through Advent we will explore a different character in the Christmas story who is told "Do not be afraid". You are invited to join us as we consider how God goes with us and how God uses us even with our fears.

I look forward to journeying with you this Advent as we look to Christmas and the incredible hope that God is still with us today.

Grace + peace,  
Pastor Trent

## *Sunday Morning Services*

*Sunday School at 9:30am*

*Worship at 10:30am*

***Join us online:***

*Facebook Live at*

*<https://www.facebook.com/centenaryshelbyville>*

*&*

*YouTube*

*<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFQ7gRUEwCTavSK9UvqiMaQ>*



We keep everyone updated about our programs and events by email and Facebook. Please contact the church office with any questions or if you would like to be added to the email list.

Church office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am-2:00pm.

Assistance days and hours are Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am-1:00pm. Centenary offers financial assistance for rent or utilities and food assistance.

## **STAFF**

### **Lead Pastor**

Trent Lloyd- [tlloyd@shelbycumc.org](mailto:tlloyd@shelbycumc.org)

### **Associate Pastor**

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### **Director of Worship and Program Ministries**

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### **Office Manager**

Amanda Shirley- 502-633-4510 or [ashirley@shelbycumc.org](mailto:ashirley@shelbycumc.org)

Look! Our staff have a new email address. Old email addresses do still work



Lay Leader & Chair of SPRC -

Amy Waggener

Chair of Ops Team - Tracy Bertram

Co-Chairs of Trustees -

Rena George and Doug Butler

Chair of Finance - Candice Isa

Children's Ministry Chair -

Amanda Ethington

Youth Ministry Chair - Nick Headley

*\*Notes from Ops Team & Church Council available upon request from the church office.*



Deadline for the January 2023 Crosstalk will be Wednesday, December 21, 2022





14th CYF 6:30pm  
 7th Choir 5:30pm  
 Advent Prayer Service 7:00pm  
 11th Coffee and doughnuts in the Fellowship Hall  
 9:15am  
 Deadline for Pledge Cards  
 Deadline for Christmas Meals donations  
 CYF 6:30pm  
 12th Redwoods 10:00am  
 Ops Team Meeting  
 6:30pm  
 14th Choir 5:30pm  
 Advent Prayer Service 7:00pm  
 18th Coffee and doughnuts in the Fellowship Hall  
 9:15am  
 Christmas Meal bag assembly after worship  
 CYF Christmas Party 6:30pm  
 21st Crosstalk Deadline  
 Blue Christmas: Longest Night Service  
 7:00pm  
 24th Christmas Eve Services 6:00pm & 11:00pm  
 25th Christmas Morning service 9:00am  
 26th Church office closed.

1 Jenny Gardner  
 Jeff Viniard  
 4 Emery Phillips  
 5 Katie Lloyd  
 8 Bill Tuttle  
 9 Ethan Adams  
 Dickie Phillips  
 11 Emily Krauss  
 Holly Husband  
 11 Eileen Fitzpatrick  
 12 Krysta Ethington  
 Kim Munsterman  
 14 Kendra Brown  
 16 Vicki Logan  
 17 Zachary Poehlein  
 Nick Headley  
 21 Katherine Hisle  
 23 Janice Huggins  
 25 Geri Cicchella  
 26 Leslie Hobbs  
 27 John Greulich  
 28 Larry Crouch  
 Shelley Goodwin  
 30 Jim Frazier  
 Dar Watts



To all the wonderful cooks, card senders, chauffeurs, phone callers and prayer warriors here at CUMC a great big thank you from the Coots'. As you more than likely know, Jim had a little set back as the result of a broken leg in mid October. With a lot of physical therapy and determination on Jim's part, the bone is stabilizing. This means he cannot put much weight on that leg for at least another week or two. The chemotherapy has been put on hold for now because his doctor says we want the bone to heal properly and the treatment could interfere with this. It was our hope to have this final treatment of this round done before Christmas, but, we will see. We are so thankful for our church family and all they have done to lift us up during this time.

With much love, Jim and Terry.

# ADVENT PRAYER SERVICES

Nov. 30th, Dec. 7th, & Dec. 14th @ 7:00pm

*Join us for a simple service of worship and prayer as we prepare for Christmas.*

IN THE YOUTH BUILDING



## Blue Christmas:

**A service of hope on the longest night**

**December 21st at 7:00pm**

Centenary UMC

Online and in-person

## *Christmas Eve Services*

**Candle Lighting & Communion**

**December 24th at 6:00pm & 11:00pm**

## *Christmas Day Service*

**PJs & Poetry**

**December 25th at 9:00am**

**Come as you are for a celebratory service of music and Christmas poetry!**

# Fuzzy Angels

By Mary Lou Smith Madigan

“So what was it like, Star? What was it like when the baby Jesus was born?”

Star gazed at the little angel Zory, then closed her eyes and began to speak. “It has been over 2000 years, and still it seems like yesterday. We had heard the prophecies. Several thought the time was near, but nobody knew. We were, all of us, just waiting.” Star opened her eyes, beamed extra rays toward earth, and smiled.

“And then we got word: it is time. ‘Get ready—everyone to your stations!’” The herald angels lined up. Gabriel took out his pitch pipe to make sure everyone was on key. I plotted my course, which would lead to Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph were almost there.”

“And you led the shepherds?” The little angel’s eyes were wide. “How did you lead them? How were you bright enough to lead them?”

“I can shine extra brightly on very special occasions. And this was the most special of all. Here, I’ll show you, but just for a minute.”

Star flew away a great distance, cast away her robe, and turned into the most dazzling light Zory had ever seen. As he rubbed his eyes, he felt Star returning.

“I had no idea you could do that. Of course, they could follow you.” Awestruck, he looked down at his feet, and then up again. “I wish I had been there.”

Something in his eyes, in his wistful voice touched her heart. “Maybe I can arrange that.”

“Are you kidding?” Then he drew back, amazed at himself. Stars don’t joke. When they speak, you stand up straight and salute. And this was The Special Star.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to sound disrespectful. But is that possible?”

“Yes, it is. You can go back. You can see the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. But you will have to blend in.”

He scratched his head. “Won’t they notice my wings?”

“They would. But I can change your appearance. Are you willing to be one of the animals? A donkey?”

“Yes, oh yes. Anything to see the baby.”

“The shepherds will kneel. Other visitors will bring gifts. Can you bring a gift?”

“I’ll do my best.”

Star touched Zory’s shoulder. And now he was standing in a stable watching a woman covering a newborn baby. At that point, he realized he had four legs and two floppy ears.

The shepherds were kneeling. The little donkey stepped between them to draw closer to the baby, who was awake. One of the shepherds got up and bumped into the donkey, surprising him. “Hee-haw!” The baby looked up at the noise—and smiled.

“He smiled at me! I gave him his first smile,” the donkey rejoiced.

And then he was standing again by his friend, Star.

“How was it?” she asked, but he could tell she already knew.

“That turned out so well, I have another assignment for you. It may prove difficult.”

“Really? How can I help?” Zory asked.

Now it was Star’s turn to be wistful. “I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but in this day and age people spend time Christmas shopping, looking for bargains, wrapping presents, and decorating. Children write letters to Santa Claus asking for gifts. All of this isn’t a bad thing, but where is the baby Jesus? It’s his birthday, after all.” She took out a tissue and wiped her eyes. “If you can help people recognize and celebrate Jesus’ birthday in one place, say New York City, the joy and awareness will spread.”

Zory cocked his head. “You’re going to tell me I have to blend in. How? A donkey won’t work.”

Star smiled. “There is one little animal that will fit in. I will send you to a church near Central Park with a manger scene. You will see what to do when you get there.” She touched his shoulder, and he was right in front of the plastic Mary and Joseph, the animals, the shepherds. Except they were giants! He skittered backwards on tiny feet, terrified. He even cried and then noticed he was wiping his eyes with his bushy tail. I see what Star meant, he thought. A squirrel fits right in near a park. But what am I supposed to do?

He approached the nativity scene again. The giant figures seemed in order: Mary, Joseph, manger, cattle, donkey, sheep, shepherds,... Wait! The manger was empty! People were hurrying by from all directions, and no one noticed the empty manger. What can I do, he wondered. Then an idea came. He scampered into the nativity scene, zipped past the animals, and clambered up into the manger. He sat quietly at first, then began to flag his tail back and forth. The quick movements began to draw attention.

“Look, a squirrel is in the manger!”

“That’s where the baby Jesus should be!” they said.

A crowd gathered.

“Well, don’t that beat all—a squirrel in the manger!” Cell phones appeared, snapping pictures from all angles.

A little girl’s voice piped up. “Oh, he’s so cute! But where’s the baby Jesus?”

Zory jumped down and ran up a tree. Now everyone could see the manger was empty.

Voices began: “We can’t have Christmas without baby Jesus!” “We should have noticed it sooner!” “It took that little squirrel to show us!”

“Go look for a doll the right size for the manger!”

A man in jeans and a blue and red checked flannel shirt, and sandals, stepped forward. Something in his eyes quieted the group and he spoke: “While you’re looking for a doll for the manger, why not bring some things you love but no longer need? Almost everyone has so much.” He glanced around. “And a few here have so little.” He paused. “But if you bring gifts to the Christ child, more will come. More to share Christmas.” Zory scampered away to follow him into Central Park, but he was out of sight. The squirrel searched for a couple of hours. By the time he returned, the nativity scene had a doll in the manger and gifts piled deep around it.

He stayed until sunset. Those in need came and left with food, coats, gloves, scarves, books, toys, baskets, blankets. An assortment of gifts, an assortment of needs—all fulfilled.

Zory gazed at the baby in the manger. I guess I did my job, he thought. Jesus is the reason for the season, and I reminded them of that. He felt the warmth and joy of Jesus’ birth spreading through him, spreading through this corner of New York City.

And then he was beside Star again. “Well done, Zory!” she said. “Your reminder of the baby Jesus is a light that is spreading over the earth. Look down!” And Zory saw points of light flashing, lights of love and hope.

For a moment, in his heart, he was a squirrel again, and he flagged his tail from pure happiness!



## Prayer Line

Just a thought and a prayer that more of you will sign on to the new Prayer Line.

Many of you already have let me know that you want to continue to be among those “Prayer Warriors” that have upheld the family here at CUMC through the leadership of Clyde Tharp.

Many years ago, Clyde felt the need and the calling to form a praying group within CUMC to lift up the needs of the community and practice the gift of prayer! I thank Clyde for all of us who have benefitted by having this church pray for needs within our families, our community, our world.

After serving in this position for many years, through three different pastors, and some three hundred plus prayer requests and caring for this congregation in a multitude of different ways, he felt the need to retire as of November 1 and to trust that God would bring someone new to do this ministry.

When I read his notice about retiring, I started praying that God would raise up someone. I knew that Clyde would be a hard act to follow! He has served us well! He has compassionately listened, articulated the needs requested, communicated well within our community, and encouraged us to pray! As I prayed every day for Clyde and for someone to take up this ministry, I kept feeling like maybe it was me! I questioned the wisdom of that, to put it mildly, thinking “it’s not me, Lord!” However, the “nudging” of the Holy Spirit kept at me! After about a week of this arguing with that sense of “Carol, you can do this!” and feeling like He would provide if I would agree with Him, I prayed, “Lord, you know that I am not one to jump in and say ‘Here I am!’ and so, it will take someone asking me to do it, if I am supposed to!”

I hadn’t told anyone about this prayer, really kind of hoping God wouldn’t take me up on it, for fear of not being able to do it like Clyde had so ably led us! So, I added in my prayer that I would need a sign that it was really His will for me: the sign was to be that someone would have to ask me to take up this ministry. About two hours later, my phone rang. I looked at the name of the caller! It was Pastor Trent! And he asked me if I would pray about doing the prayer ministry! I told him the story I just have related to you and he said, “Well, if you needed a sign, I think this is it!”

So here I am, in joyful but humble and insecure obedience, trusting that The Holy Spirit will provide what I need! In the words of that old hymn, I am “standing in the need of prayer!” Please pray for me as I step into this ministry.

I want to encourage you, if you haven’t already signed on to become part of the new Prayer Line to please do so. Just email me, at [cbsaenger@aol.com](mailto:cbsaenger@aol.com), and I will add your name! I know many of you were on the old listing, but new technology is available to us now through the able expertise of Michael Watts, who is teaching me to use it. Clyde felt the list needed updating, and it was a way to have people who really wanted to pray for others to recommit to being part of this group -in Clyde’s words, “to have some skin in the game!” and to be intentional about praying for people! Being an Intercessor is a vital ministry!

Prayer is powerful, and God has given this gift for us to use for His glory and His people’s good!

Blessings,  
Carol

# Assistance Program

By Amanda Shirley



How is it December already? Where has this year gone? While we are in the middle of the holiday shuffle wondering what gifts to get for everyone; and what food we are bringing to the next party take a moment and thank the Lord that these are our worries. There are many in our community worrying about how they will make the rent this month or keep their necessary utilities on. How to get fuel oil or propane for their heater. Where will their next meal come from, how will they feed the kids when they are home for the winter break. That's not including them worrying about how to get a gift for their children for Christmas. How will they explain to a child that Santa couldn't come this year. Of why they got a coat and socks while their school friends got a new PS5. Over this year our numbers have done nothing but keep going up. There are so many variables that lead people to where they are at. Affordable, reliable childcare. Transportation issues, lack of affordable housing, not to mention rising food cost. In October Centenary received 22 applications for assistance. Of those requests we were able to assist 19 of those households impacting 53 of our neighbors. For food assistance Centenary handed out 137 bags of food feeding 288 individuals. Remember these are October's numbers even though I am writing this mid-November. We are very close to doubling the food assistance numbers from last year. For financial assistance those numbers have gone way up as well not doubled but we have passed last year's number of requests. I do my best to help people in the best way possible and refer them to other programs that could help them as well. With the numbers of requests for both food and financial assistance going up the funds available are going down much quicker. There is still some funding left from the grants received to help with purchasing food that Dare to Care doesn't provide, but we have stopped purchasing household items that people need and ask for. Those items are toilet paper, paper towels, laundry soap, cleaning supplies and person care items. For financial assistance we are extremely low on funding, and I expect we will run out of funds in December. Centenary has not run out of funds since September of 2019. Once the funds are exhausted, we will have to turn people away until we get more donations. If you have any questions about the assistance program or questions about how you can help our neighbors, please contact the church office.

## Food Assistance

Food assistance is available for bi-weekly pick up per household. Meaning it can be picked up every other week as needed. Just need ID showing Shelby County Residency.



## Rent or Utility Assistance

### **You will need:**

- Valid Photo ID
- Proof of income- check stub or Award letter for SSI or Unemployment, food stamp letter, ect.
- Current copy of utility bill must be in a disconnect status

or

- Lease agreement with contact information for landlord. Please bring any current receipts for payments with current balance due.

**Financial assistance is once a year.**

**Meaning 12month minimum since applicant last received assistance.**



## NOTES FROM KAY



Advent is a season of waiting. Hoping. Listening. Reflecting. Preparing. Anticipating what is just beyond the horizon-- the arrival of Christ in our world, our lives, our hearts. Here are some wonderful thoughts to ponder:

"Advent: the time to listen for footsteps - you can't hear footsteps when you're running yourself." ~ Bill McKibben

"The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before ... What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, like Moses in the cleft of the rock, watching God's [back] fade in the distance. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running. For rushing. For worrying. For pushing. For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon." ~ Jan L. Richardson

"In the silence of a midwinter dusk, there is a sound so faint that for all you can tell it may be only the sound of the silence itself. You hold your breath to listen. You are aware of the beating of your heart. The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment."  
~ Frederick Buechner

"The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord" ~ Henri Nouwen



*Coffee &  
Donuts*

**DEC. 11 & 18**

**Fellowship Hall**

**9:15am**





Youth Winter Retreat

Jan. 13th-14th at the Agape Wilderness Retreat Center

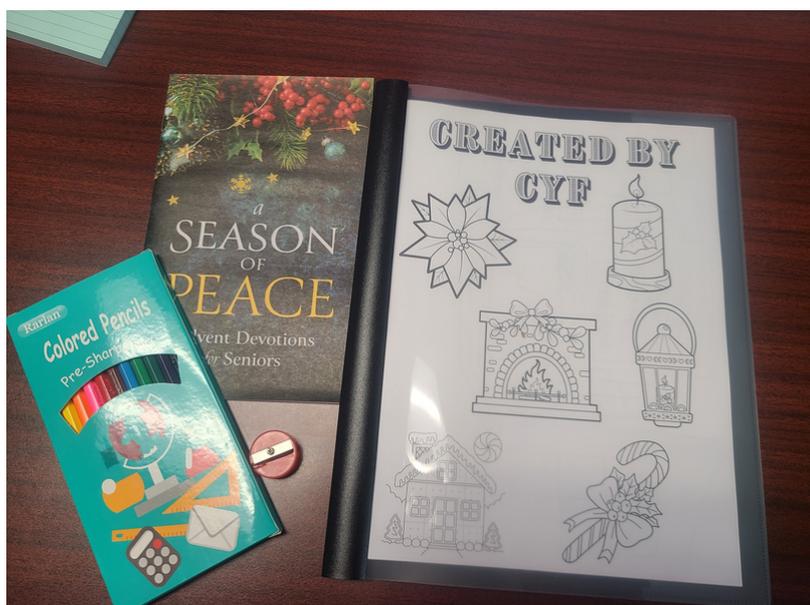
RSVP by Dec. 18th

Cost is \$45 and scholarships are available.

Guest speaker is Jamalle Jones, the new campus pastor for the U of L Wesley Foundation.

Theme: Centered on God

## Youth Service project for shut ins



The youth do monthly service projects. This month the youth drew original color pages for the shut-ins of Centenary UMC. Each person will receive a coloring book, color pencils, sharpener and an Advent devotional.

## Youth Ice Skating outing

November's Youth fellowship activity was picked by the youth. They chose to go ice skating.



# Children's Ministry



We are so glad to have children back in church. However, with the growing numbers on Sunday morning during Continued Worship, we are in need of volunteers to come help during our lessons. If you would like to help out in our area, please reach out. Also, we are looking for some new faces to be on our Children's Moment videos. If you or any child that can read and expresses interest in being in front of a camera, we would love to have you. If you have any questions, please reach out to Reesa Headley at [reesa.headley@gmail.com](mailto:reesa.headley@gmail.com).

