

## An Advent Sermon Series

December 19 9 am and 11 am

Dec. 24 4 pm and 6 pm

December 26 10 am

[www.fumcgadsden.org/media](http://www.fumcgadsden.org/media)

Changing Lives by Sharing Christ, Making Disciples, Serving and Giving Hope

12-19-21

Sermon Notes

"When Joy Is Our Song"

What is it about music that brings us such joy? Did you feel that this past Sunday when we had our Christmas Cantata presented by our CANCEL Choir and Orchestra? I sure did! What about Sunday night, when the children sang? Angelic! How could you hear those kids sing *Joy to the World* and not smile?

One thing I noticed this past Sunday during the service was the congregation *singing*. You all really sang out on *Hark the Herald Angels Sing!* We rejoiced! What is it about joy that makes us want to sing out? Have you ever noticed Mary's song of joy in Luke Chapter 1?

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;

<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever." (Luke 1: 46-55 NRSV)

What made Mary so joyous that she couldn't help but sing? It certainly wasn't her "station" in life. Women in Mary's day were not given much recognition. They were mostly overlooked, to be honest. Mary was also an unwed pregnant girl, who lived in a culture that would have not only looked down on that, but *could* have stoned her to death. How does she sing with all that going on? Maybe you have wondered how you could sing a song of joy this Christmas given your circumstances. And what's the key to Christmas joy, anyway?

I think it starts with the first word of her song (*Magnificat* in Latin). "My soul magnifies the Lord." Here's something for us to reflect on this Advent: What are we "magnifying" in our lives right now? Our problems? Our own little corner of the world? What would happen if the Lord was the absolute focus of our attention?

See you Sunday,  
Pastor Sam

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**  
4:00 pm and 6:00 pm, in person  
5:00 pm, Live Nativity, outside  
on corner of 5th & Chestnut St.

### Worship Opportunities

- **Mosaic:** 6:00 pm, **Thursday**,  
(In person @ Back Forty Beer Company)

- **Thursday Worship:** 5:30 pm  
**Sunday Worship**

**Celebration: 9 am\***

**Traditions 11 am\***

**\*In-Person and Online**

[www.fumcgadsden.org/media](http://www.fumcgadsden.org/media) or on  
Facebook Live: @FUMCGadsden

### Tech Team Schedule

(Please arrive 45 minutes  
prior to the start of the service.)

#### December 19

**Celebration:** Will Brookshire, Sheila Freeman, Mark Condra

**Traditions:** Sheila Freeman,  
Tammy Hayes

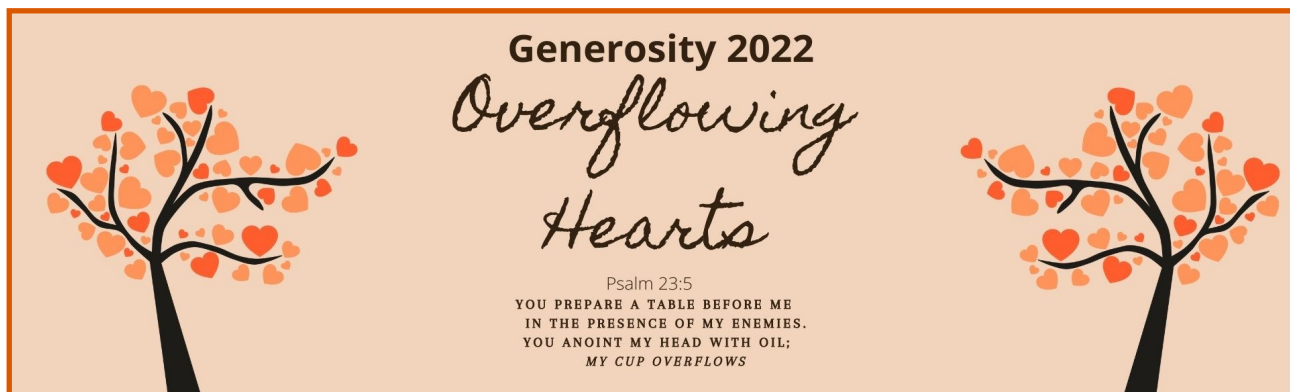
#### Christmas Eve, December 24

**4:00 pm**, Will Brookshire, Bill Haller,  
Sheila Freeman

**6:00 pm**, Eric Wright,  
Brad Barnes, Liz Barnes

#### December 26

**Celebration:** Eric Wright, Bill Haller,  
Brynn Crain



***“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.”***

(Ecclesiastes 3:1, NIV)

Heraclitus the Greek Philosopher once said, “The only constant in life is change.” You might be more familiar with “the only thing that never changes is the fact that everything is always changing.” If you are like me, you are not really a fan of change. Even though I know Jesus is in charge and not me, I prefer the routine that makes me feel like I’m in control of my situation.

I don’t think anyone would argue that the COVID-19 Pandemic has changed our world. Almost every facet of our lives has changed. Our jobs, our finances, how we interact with friends and family, even how we worship has changed. The COVID-19 Pandemic has most assuredly impacted on our Church and its mission. Even in light of vaccines and boosters our in-person attendance at worship and our giving has seriously been impacted, and change will be necessary. I am willing to admit that change may not be bad. History teaches us that without change we tend to live in the past and are unwilling to progress.

Have you ever wondered what God thinks about COVID-19? The writer of Ecclesiastes tells us that there is a time for the COVID-19 Pandemic and a season for the COVID-19 Pandemic under the heavens. So how are we to react to all the changes that the COVID-19 Pandemic has caused in our lives? For us believers, the words in Jeremiah 29:11 may be our biggest comfort “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

We are asking for your prayers for your church and its mission in our community, your presence in worship, your financial gifts in support of your church and your talents in service to your church and the community.

We thank you for your sacrificial giving for the rest of 2021, and the generosity of your pledges and gifts toward the church budget for 2022. Let’s rededicate ourselves to align the plans for GFUMC with the plans the Lord has to prosper His Church and give His Church hope and a future.

May God Bless Gadsden First United Methodist Church!

*Dave Jensen*

*Church Treasurer*

---

2022 Estimate of Giving Cards are available in the Chestnut Street lobby and at worship services, if you have not received one by mail.

- You can also fill out a 2022 Estimate of Giving Card online @ [www.fumcgadsden.org](http://www.fumcgadsden.org).
- Your estimate of giving card is confidential and is not a legally binding contract. It is your personal commitment to the Lord.
- Please call the financial secretary anytime to discuss your giving plan.
- Please return your completed card to the church as soon as possible.



## The Heart that Grew Three Sizes, Wednesdays in December!

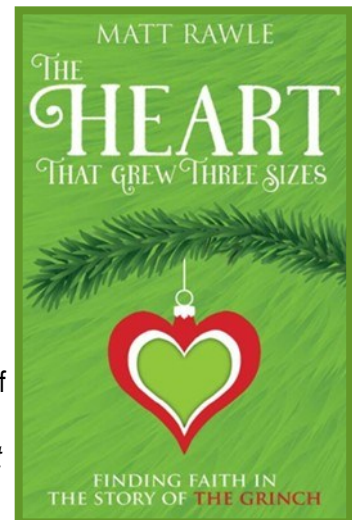


Rediscover the gift of Advent that comes without packages, ribbons, and bows.

We don't know why the Grinch hated Christmas. We just know he did. In this new Advent study, Matt Rawle explores the faith themes in the Christmas classic, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* including, how did the Grinch's heart grow three sizes come Christmas morning? How did Christmas save

the Grinch? Could it be that the very thing we think we hate is the one thing that changes our lives? This Advent and Christmas season, look at a familiar classic through the lens of faith and see how Christ speaks to us through our culture.

Join Pastor Sam on Wednesday mornings at 11 am in person or on Wednesday Nights at 6 pm, December 1, 8, 15, & 22, in the Gathering Room.



**Wednesday Bible Study w/ Pastor Sam at 11:00 am and 6:00 pm.  
No Wednesday Night Dinner this Week**

## Thursdays, Men at the Well, 7:00 am via Zoom—A Study of Genesis

You are invited to join the weekly ZOOM bible study with the Men at the Well small group. Everyone is invited to join this discussion group. It meets each Thursday morning at 7 am. Tammy Jackson is leading the current study of Genesis 1-11, pre-history and what it means to us.

Go to [www.fumcgadsden.org/menatthewell](http://www.fumcgadsden.org/menatthewell) for more details.

Contact Todd Rains, Mark Condra or Mark Casey or any of the Men at the Well for more information and the Zoom link.

## RECONNECT with the Sunday School Class of Your Choice!

- Living Water Sunday School Class, "Down to Earth" by Mike Slaughter, Chapel (118)
- Martin Fellowship Class, "International Sunday School Lessons", Room 116.
- Pathfinders Class, "Incarnation-Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas" by Adam Hamilton, Room 208

Seekers, Discovery and The Middle Sunday School Classes are currently not meeting.  
*Members are welcome to meet with another group until their class returns.*







## Youth Ministry News

Wednesday Nights Youth Group  
6:00 pm Room 211/Gym

**Youth Live Nativity on Dec 24th 5pm-6pm**

**Save the Date: Youth Super Bowl Party,  
February 13, 2022, 5:00-7:00 pm.**

Confirmation Classes will begin on January 9th. Time: 5:00-7:00 pm each Sunday night. *Please mark your calendars for the following dates: Jan 9th, Jan 23rd, Feb 6th, Feb 20th, March 6th, & March 13th. Confirmation Sunday will be March 20th.*

## Children's Ministry



**"Celebrate Wonder"**  
Children's Church  
In-Person, Sundays  
9 am and 11 am during Worship  
Children's Worship Room (Room 108)

## ELC News

- ◇ Our annual Christmas Program was Thursday, December 9th. The children did a great job of spreading Christmas Joy!! Afterwards, we all had fun at class parties.
- ◇ ELC's Christmas break will run from Friday, December 10th through Monday, January 3rd. Doors open Tuesday, January 4th for our Spring 2022 semester.

—Helene Haller

**Wonderful Wednesday  
Wednesday Night Dinner will  
return on January 5, 2021**



## UMCOR and Disaster Relief for Kentucky

Dear Friends,

The nation awakened this past Saturday morning to the news that during the night and early morning hours, tornadoes had wreaked havoc in parts of Tennessee, Kentucky and several neighboring states. Lives were lost, buildings destroyed and communities devastated. Bishop Bill McAlilly, who oversees the Tennessee and Memphis Conferences (which will become the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference on January 1, 2022) and Bishop Leonard Fairley, episcopal leader of the Kentucky Conference, both anticipate a long recovery process for the communities most affected by the tornadoes.

As the news of the aftermath of the storms continues to unfold, our hearts break at the pain, trauma and suffering caused by these tornadoes. We want to do something to help those who are hurting. Yet we are not sure what to do, especially during this early phase of the recovery process. At times like this, I am so thankful for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), our church's humanitarian arm. UMCOR has already made emergency grants to conferences to help with the immediate needs of survivors and will continue to be partners in the recovery process for the long haul. Here are some additional actions you and I can take today to make a difference in this situation.

1. Pray for the people, communities and churches affected by the tornadoes.
2. Assist our Conference in collecting UMCOR Hygiene Kits. These and other Disaster Response supplies can be dropped off at our Disaster Warehouse in Decatur. As always, please call the Warehouse at 256-341-9961 and coordinate with the volunteers before you make a drop-off.
3. Give to UMCOR's U.S. Disaster Response and Recovery through Advance #901670.
4. Donations also can be made directly to the Kentucky Conference's Disaster Response Advance 200902, Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference's Disaster Response Fund, the Missouri Conference Disaster Response, the Arkansas Tornado Fund and the Illinois Great Rivers Conference Disaster Response Ministry.

5. When the affected Conferences deem that the time is right to extend an invitation to early response (ERT) and volunteers in mission teams, consider participating in rebuilding efforts.

During this time of year, Christ-followers are reminded that God is with us in the birth of the Christ Child. Matthew 1:23 reads, "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel" which means, "God is with us."

God's presence is often manifested through our words and actions. May those who have been devastated by last weekend's storms experience Emmanuel "God is with us" through our words, prayers, gifts and service.

It is a joy to serve as your bishop.

Blessings, Debra Wallace-Padgett, Resident Bishop, Holston and North Alabama Conferences

## GFUMC



*"By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35*

## Clothes Closet

### Workdays

1st & 3rd Tuesdays

### Open to Public

1st & 3rd Wednesdays

9:00 am to 11:00 am

516 Broad Street Gadsden

## Ladle of Love

Fridays, 11:00am-12:00pm,  
at the Portico entrance.



## Angel Tree Ministry



"Thank You's" go out to ALL who shopped for our Angels from the Angel Tree in the Sanctuary. Twenty-five children will be happy to receive their Santa Clause list on Christmas morning because of your generosity! All your gifts have been delivered to the Salvation Army where they will be distributed to these families.

## 2021 Mission Update

2021 was a year full of many Missions that helped so many during a year of great needs. Our church has shared our blessings and shared Christ's light in our community!

—Thank you, The Mission Team!

## UMW NEWS

### Welcome 2022 UMW Executive Board Members!

President, Barbara Bennett  
Vice President, Delores Abney  
Treasurer, Jamie Payton  
Secretary, Dotty Ivey  
Parliamentarian, Eileen Graham  
Historian, Susan Copeland  
Secretary of Howell Erwin Fund, Debbie Hiltz  
Secretary of Program Resources, Debbie Leach



Find out more about mission and service opportunities @ [www.fumcgadsden.org/serve](http://www.fumcgadsden.org/serve)

### Church Phone

256-543-8200

[fumc@fumcgadsden.org](mailto:fumc@fumcgadsden.org)

#gfumcreconnect2021



## What's New for 2022



### “Integrity of the Heart” January Sermon Series

January 2- 11 am, One Worship Service

“Who We Are”, *Genesis 20:1-7*, Holy Communion

January 9- 9 am and 11 am

“What We Want to Become”, *Mark 1: 16-20, Matt 28:18-20*

January 16- 9 am and 11 am

“What We Want to Do”, *Matthew 22: 34-40*

January 23- 9 am and 11 am

“Where We Want to Go”, *John 15:1-5*

### Bible Study: Confirmation for Grownups

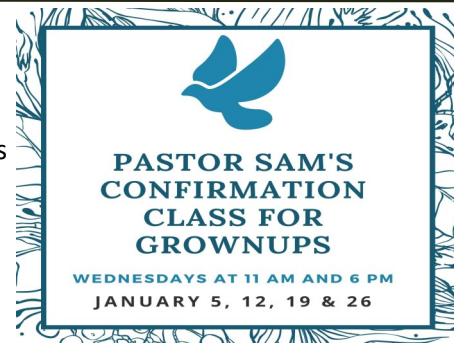
January 5- Knowing & Loving God: Father, Son & Holy Spirit

January 12- Knowing & Loving Self: Unwrapping Our Spiritual Gifts

January 19- Knowing & Loving Others: Who is My Neighbor?

January 26- Celebrating the Christian Year– Methodist Style

*In the Gathering Room*



### New Small Group Study on Sunday Mornings!

Starts January 23, 2022

5 Week Study, In the Gathering Room

@ 10 am

All Ages are Welcome!

**Dream Big by Bob Goff**

Led by Pastor Andy

*(He's Bringing Cinnamon Rolls!)*



### UMCNA Read Together

You are invited to join Bishop Wallace-Padgett and other North Alabama Conference United Methodist leaders in continuing this meaningful spiritual discipline. The 2022 plan will be based on writing genres. Each day of the week will include chapters from different types of Scripture. Sundays will be Gospel reading, Mondays will be law, Tuesdays history, Wednesdays we'll read Psalms, Thursdays poetry, Fridays prophets and Saturday will be epistles.

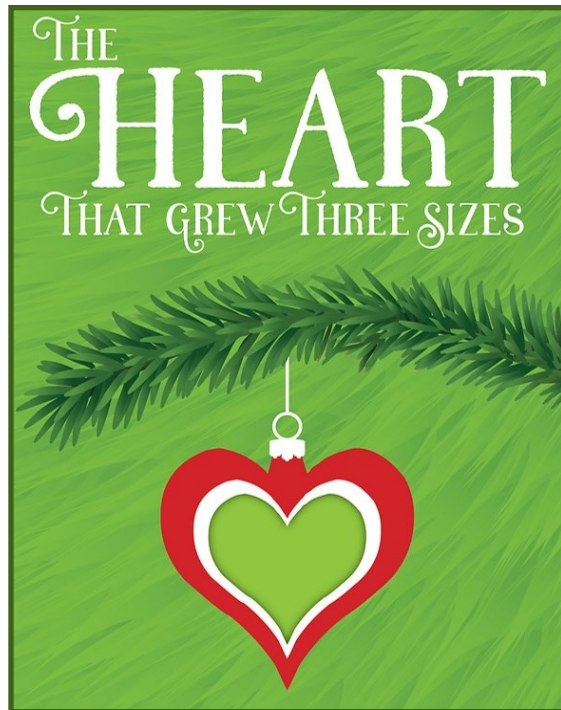
UMCNA will continue to maintain their [Facebook page](#) for comments and discussions on the daily reading and post weekly podcasts featuring meditations by North Alabama clergy and laity as they reflect on the readings for that week.

Please register your commitment to be a part of the Bishop's Bible Challenge. Through registration, UMCNA will be able to provide the materials you need. If you registered in a previous year, there is no need to register again.

The Read Together UMCNA podcast is listed on iTunes and will be posted weekly.

Go to <https://www.umcna.org/readtogether> to register and for links to the facebook page and UMCNA podcast.





## Advent Sermon Series

**Dec 19, Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**“When Joy Is Our Song”**

Celebration, 9 am and Traditions, 11 am

**Dec. 24, Christmas Eve**

**“You’d Better Watch Out”**

**There will be two Christmas Eve Candlelight  
Worship Services with Holy Communion.**

**4:00 pm, Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, in sanctuary**

**5:00 pm, Live Nativity, 5TH and Chestnut St**

**6:00 pm, Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, in sanctuary**

**Dec. 26, 1st Sun. after Christmas**

**“The Gifts We Forgot to Unwrap”**

10:00 am, One United Worship Service

– Led by Celebration Praise Band

### Honorariums and Memorials

#### **General Budget Fund**

In memory of Jack Floyd, given by Christopher Word.

In memory of Bill Campbell, given by 21 Supper Club.

In memory of Stan Walker, given by Steve & Lynne Frederick.

In memory of Stan Walker, given by Frank & Judy Dressman.

In memory of Tomilyn Isbell, given by Frank & Judy Dressman.

In memory of Stan Walker, given by Evelyn Pierson.

#### **Ladle of Love Fund:**

In memory of Stan Walker, given by Phillip & Leslie Johnson.

In memory of Stan Walker, given by Dottie Ivey.

In memory of Stan Walker, given by Peggy & Johnny Wetzel.

In memory of Stan Walker, given by Peggy Burnett.

In memory of Tomilyn Isbell, given by Peggy Burnett.

In memory of Bill Campbell, given by Peggy Burnett.

### The Children’s Library Fund

Seven Habits of Happy Kids

by Sean Covey

You’re All my Favorites

by Sam McBratney

Your Special Gift

by Max Lucado

*Donated by Bill and Helene Haller*

### Altar Flower Fund

Gifts to this fund are used to place flowers on the altar for special worship days throughout the year. Flowers may also be

placed on the altar in honor or in memory of a loved one by personal request.

Contact Susan Swann in the church office for available dates and more information.

## Important Deadlines

Information for the weekly announcement sheet **is due each Wednesday by noon.**

Events for the church calendar **are needed one month prior to the event.**

**Special Holiday Schedule**— Announcements and news for the Sunday, December 26 newsletter should be turned in to the church office by Tuesday, December 21 at noon. Announcements and news for the Sunday, January 1 newsletter should be turned in to the church office by Tuesday, December 28 at noon.

***Thank you and Merry Christmas! —Church Staff***

## Calendar for December 19-December 25, 2021

### December 19, Sunday

9:00 am, Celebration Service, in Sanctuary & live stream

10:00 am, Adult Sunday School

11:00 am, Traditions Service, in Sanctuary & live stream

### December 20, Monday

**ELC Christmas Break**

9:00 am-10:00 am, Exercise Group, Gym

### December 21, Tuesday

### December 22, Wednesday

11:00 am, Bible Study, Pastor Sam, Room 208

6:00 pm, Bible Study, Pastor Sam, Room 208

### December 23, Thursday

**Office Closed**

6:00 pm, Mosaic Worship, Back Forty Warehouse

### December 24, Friday

**Office Closed**

**No Ladle of Love**

4:00 pm, Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, in sanctuary

5:00 pm, Live Nativity, 5th and Chestnut St

6:00 pm, Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, in sanctuary

*The flowers on the altar are in honor of Laura Condra, in celebration of her birthday today, December 19, given by children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.*

*In Memory of His Life  
Stanton (Stan) Walker*

*December 2, 2021*



*In Memory of His Life  
Dr. Samuel Gavin Norris, Jr.*

*December 14, 2021*



*In Memory of Her Life  
Sandra (Sandy) Stancil Self*

*December 15, 2021*



### Immediate Prayer Concerns

Family of Sam Norris    Family of Sandy Self  
Family of Stan Walker    Lisa Dobbins  
Mikey Tonagel (Collins & Belinda Tackaberry's son-in-law)



### Continued Prayer Concerns

Nancy Smith    Bryant Grizzell    Jan Humphrey  
Carma Rayburn    Jerry McGinnis    Susan Swann  
Ann Elizabeth Casey (great-granddaughter of Dotty Ivey)



**Dec 19** Grover Kitchens, Nancy Beane, Jesse Norris, Drew McNair

**Dec 20** Laura Condra, Cheryl Midgley, Sara Kate Thornburg

**Dec 21** Robert Branch, Matt Ross, Davis Varner, Dylan Guthery

**Dec 22** Jane Herb, Jane Gargus, Caroline Long

**Dec 23** Rodney Thompson, Russell Hopper

**Dec 24** Claire Wigley, Ross Isbell, Mary Regan Whisenant, Matthew Stewart

**Dec 25** Larry Hughes, Karen Crawford, Dawn Rains, Leah Livingston, Kaity Dorsett

### Week of December 12, 2021

\*In Person Total \*426    Overall Total 1034

Online Viewer Total 608    Mosaic \*10

Thursday \*0    Adult Sunday School \*24

Celebration \*0    Traditions \*183/223

Children \*44    Youth \*21    UMW \*21

Bible Study Groups \*11/17    Other \*96

General Offering Budget \$15,200.00

General Offering Received \$15,607.00

YTD General Offering Budget \$760,000.00

YTD General Offering Rec'd \$655,288.00

**2022 "Overflowing Hearts"**

**Estimate of Giving Cards Returned:**

**71 for \$286,626.00**

**Text to Give: 256.344.8464**

### Generosity Ways to Give

[www.fumcgadsden.org/give](http://www.fumcgadsden.org/give)

**Text to Give:  
256-344-8464**

**Mail your tithe or gift:  
115 S. 5th Street  
Gadsden, AL 35901**

**Offering Plates will  
be passed during the  
worship services.**