

An Advent Sermon Series

9 am and 11 am
Nov. 28 & Dec 5, 12, 19 & 26

4 pm and 6 pm Dec. 24

www.fumcgadsden.org/media

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

12-5-21

Sermon Notes

"When Christmas Isn't Christmas"

The heart of the story of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* is the TRUE meaning of Christmas. Isn't that where we are headed in the season of Advent...towards Christmas – the REAL Christmas? Along the way, though, we will prepare. We will start with ourselves, understanding that there is a little bit of "Grinch" in most all of us. We have all had times the last couple of years when everything felt wrong. We felt grumpy during "the most wonderful time of the year."

And sometimes we have false memories of the Christmas story. We *think* we know the story – but is the Christmas story we remember *really* the Christmas story? The Scripture for this Sunday is a great example. It is the story of Magi... And of King Herod (who was worse than the Grinch at his grinchiest).

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men² and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." (Matt. 2: 1-8 NRSV)

Remember how I said we *think* we know the story? Here's a quiz: How many Magi are there? "Three," you say. Could be. But the Bible gives no number. The number three comes from legends and maybe from the three gifts. What were their names? "Gasper, Melchior, and Balthasar (who was a black man)," you say. Could be. But the Bible gives no names. That's all legend. What were the Magi's occupations? "Kings," you say... humming "We three kings of Orient are..." Actually...the Magi were many things, but they were not kings.

Will the real Christmas story please stand up? We will talk about that this Sunday, the Second Sunday of Advent. Join us!

See you Sunday,
Pastor Sam

Worship Opportunities

- **Mosaic:** 6:00 pm, **Thursday**,
(In person @ Back Forty Beer Company)
- **GSCC A Capella Choir Concert, 6:00 pm, Dec. 9, in the Sanctuary**
- **No Thursday Worship on 12/9**

Sunday Worship

Celebration Service 9:00 am
In person, Sanctuary
& online

Traditions Service 11:00 am
In person, Sanctuary
& online

www.fumcgadsden.org/media or on
Facebook Live: @FUMCgadsden

Tech Team Schedule

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

December 5

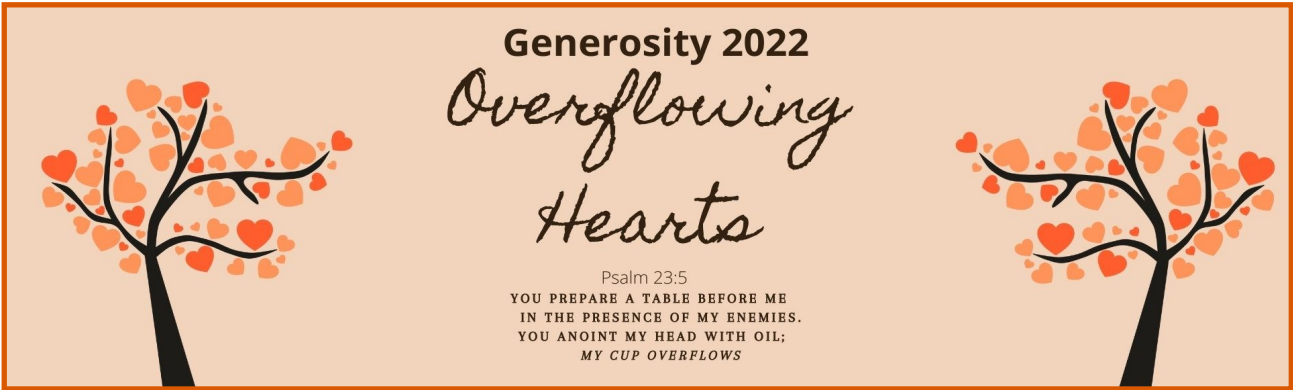
Celebration: Brynn Crain, Brad Barnes,
Elizabeth Barnes

Traditions: Tammy Hayes, Carmen
McKiven, Jacob McKiven

December 12

One Service, 11 am

Eric Wright, Bill Haller, Zach Hilburn



If your heart is also thankful, would you please prayerfully consider expressing your overflowing gratitude by giving your *service*, and by *praying* for your church, and by *supporting* its ministries financially in 2022? A card is enclosed for you to estimate your giving for 2022 and for you to say how you'd like to serve. This helps our church plan for the coming year! ***We will collect these cards throughout November, and announce our total received on the first Sunday of December. Let's make it a celebration of our overflowing hearts!***

Pastor Sam

Pastor Sam Hayes

Jay

Jay Hedgspeth, Generosity Chairman



Any questions about offerings, gifts or financial issues for the church should be directed to Sheila Witherspoon, Financial Secretary. ***You can reach Sheila Witherspoon or Pam Deru in the church office at 256-543-8200 or email giving@fumcgadsden.org.***

Generosity-Ways to Give

- www.fumcgadsden.org/give
- Text to Give:**
256-344-8464
- Mail your tithe or gift:**
115 S. 5th Street
Gadsden, AL 35901
- Offering Plates are located at the entrances the sanctuary.

Monthly Income						
Giving Percent	\$1,500	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$10,000	\$12,500
12%	180	300	600	900	1,200	1,500
10% The Tithe	150	250	500	750	1,000	1,250
8%	120	200	400	600	800	1,000
6%	90	150	300	450	600	750
4%	60	100	200	300	400	500
2%	30	50	100	150	200	250

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.
- 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 by December 5.

THE HEART THAT GREW THREE SIZES



Advent Sermon Series

Nov. 28, First Sunday of Advent — *“When Everything Is Wrong”*,
9 am and 11 am, Hanging of the Greens in Both Services

Dec. 5, Second Sunday of Advent — *“When Christmas Isn’t Christmas”*,
Celebration, 9 am and Traditions, 11 am

Thurs. Dec. 9 — *Special GSCC A Capella Choir Concert in place of Thursday Worship. Everyone invited to come at 6 pm.*

Dec 12, Third Sunday of Advent —

One United Worship Service at 11:00 AM

Christmas Choir Cantata with Orchestra

Special Worship: 5:00 pm – Children’s Christmas Musical in Sanctuary

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”*

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion, In the Sanctuary

At 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm

Dec. 26, 1st Sun. after Christmas — *“The Gifts We Forgot to Unwrap”*

10:00 am, One United Worship Service

– Led by Celebration Praise Band

CELEBRATE WITH
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF GADSDEN

**Christmas
Cantata
11 AM
December 12**

*Choir &
Orchestra*

1115 S. 5th Street
Gadsden, Alabama 35904

DECEMBER 12, 2021 | 11 AM

GFUMC KIDS PRESENT

**A
CHILD OF
LOVE**

SUNDAY DECEMBER 12TH AT 5PM

“I AM A CHILD OF GOD.” ~ JOHN 1:12

The Heart that Grew Three Sizes, Wednesdays in December!

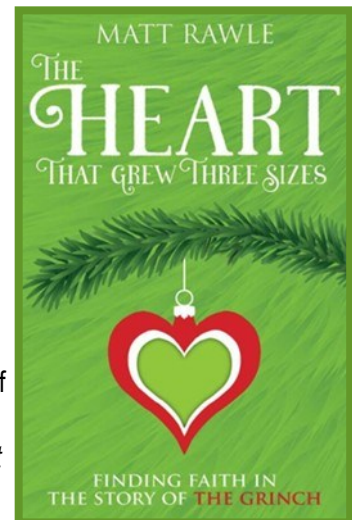


Rediscover the gift of Advent that comes without packages, ribbons, and bows.

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.
12/8 Dinner at 5:15 PM: Barbecue, \$7 per person, \$3 for 11 & Under**

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 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, "Simon Peter: Flawed But Faithful Disciple" by Adam Hamilton, 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.



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.



A Message from Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett

Dear Friends,

II Corinthians 5:17 is one of my life verses. "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new."

The Greek word Paul chose for new in this verse is *kainos* referencing a new creation that has not existed previously. This has greater implications than if Paul had instead used *neos*, meaning new in an already established category.

The biblical concept of *kainos* new is a pillar of Christian doctrine. Since God is about the work of making us new every day, we are transformed throughout our lives into a new creation, continuously growing in our resemblance to the one we follow, Jesus Christ. Evidence of this transformation is seen in our words, attitudes, actions, and lifestyle.

One way that we open ourselves to experience *kainos* new is by practicing the spiritual discipline of reading Scripture. This is because we encounter God in the pages of Scripture. And each time we meet the living God, we are changed.

With that in mind, I invite you to join me in reading through the Bible together as a North Alabama Conference in 2022. This initiative which was first launched in North Alabama by our Adult Ministries Team is a way in which we open ourselves to experience God's presence and *kainos* new on an individual basis and as a conference.

While we will be reading the Bible through the year from cover-to-cover, each week participants will read from the Gospel, Law, History, Psalms, Poetry, Prophecy and the Epistles. A detailed reading list will be made available after registering for Read Together 2022.

I have discovered first-hand how formative it is for an individual to read the Bible cover-to-cover each year. This is multiplied many times more as we Read Together as a North Alabama community.

Many thanks to the Adult Ministries Team, chaired by Stephanie Sparks and staffed by Assistant Director of Communication Lyn Cosby, for their work across the years on the Read Together initiative. The team will be publicizing the details of Read Together 2022 in the near future. In the meantime, please prayerfully consider joining me in reading through the Bible in 2022 as we continue to become *kainos* new in Christ as individuals and as a North Alabama community.

As always, it is a privilege to serve as your bishop.

Blessings,

Debra Wallace-Padgett

Resident Bishop

Holston and North Alabama Conferences



Youth Ministry News

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

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. On February 13th the youth will have a Super Bowl Party from 5:00-7:00 pm.

Confirmation Sunday will be March 20th during each service.

ELC News

- ◇ This week was our annual Christmas Pajama Day on Thursday, December 2nd; what joy it was to see everyone in their special pajamas.
- ◇ Our annual Christmas Program will be Thursday, December 9th at 9:30 in the sanctuary; followed by Christmas parties in each class.
- ◇ Christmas break will run from Friday, December 10th through Monday, January 3rd. Doors open Tuesday, January 4th for our Spring 2022 semester.

—Helene Haller

Wednesday, December 8, Barbecue

\$7 per person \$3 for Ages 11 and under

Please text your reservation to 256.490.5018 by noon on Mondays.

Children's Ministry



"Celebrate Wonder"

Children's Church

In-Person, Sundays

9 am and 11 am during Worship

Children's Worship Room (Room 108)





Angel Tree Ministry

The Angel Tree is in the sanctuary again this year. Thank you for participating in this Special Project to bring JOY to a child at Christmas time! When taking a name from the tree, please follow these instructions so we will be able to keep up with the child's name and your name to have everything turned in on time.

1. Select an Angel from the Angel Tree in the Sanctuary.
2. Write your name on the back of the Angel and leave the Angel on the tree!
3. Tear list off at perforation and take with you to shop!
4. Label all gift items with code at bottom or list and return to the church! (No need to wrap!)
5. Other instructions can be found on the back of the list!

The deadline is December 10th!

**If you would like to reserve an angel by phone, please call the church office and we will be happy to assist you in selecting an angel and sending you the shopping list.*

Missions for November

Thank you to everyone who shopped for a family and filled a bag with groceries to be distributed by the Salvation Army. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated! Also a Big Thank you goes out to all who gave so generously to purchase the cakes for the CommUnity Thanksgiving Celebration. This kindness shown by our congregation shines Christ Love to all who receive it!

Striplin Elementary School

The A/B Honor Roll Bags were given to students recently and the \$50.00 Visa cards for the "Teacher's of the Month" will be given out soon. It takes \$600.00 to fulfill our commitment to all of the Teachers' cards. PLEASE give to support our adopted school so we can help make a difference in the lives of our children. Thank you for your continued generosity, —Your Mission Team

UMW NEWS

December Calendar 2021

UMW Luncheon will be **Monday, December 6 at 12:00 (noon)** in the gathering room. We will have a delicious meal of a Greek Chicken salad from Little Bridge Marina along with tea, lemonade, water and a chocolate chip cookie.

The Early Learning Center (ELC) children will be our very special program.

We will also have the annual poinsettias to distribute to our at home members. Remember to make your reservations with your circle leaders or contact Delores Abney at 256-458-0376 or email to deloresdda53@gmail.com by noon on Friday, December 3.

The Executive Board will meet at 10:30 am in Room 208. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. This will be the last board meeting of 2021. We have several items on our agenda. Come and greet our new 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

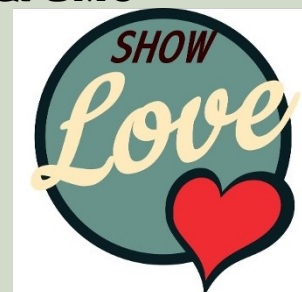
Secretary of Program Resources, Debbie Leach.

A big thank you to the Nominating Committee for contacting all our new executive members.

Thank you to UMW ladies for approval at the November meeting.



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.

Clients served in
October

Ladle of Love 403

Clothes Closet 210



Hats off to our Volunteers!

Thank you to all our volunteers for their time and service to these missions!

Find out more about mission and service opportunities @ www.fumcgadsden.org/serve

Church Phone

256-543-8200

fumc@fumcgadsden.org

#gfumcreconnect2021

Calendar for December 5-December 11, 2021

December 5, Sunday

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

10:00 am, Adult Sunday School Classes

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

December 6, Monday

9:00 am-1:00 pm, ELC Fall Schedule

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

10:30 am, UMW Executive Board, Room 208

12:00 pm, **UMW Luncheon, Gathering Room,**

Program: Christmas Music by ELC Children

6:00 pm, Choir Practice, Choir Room

December 7, Tuesday

9:00 am-1:00 pm, ELC Fall Schedule

5:00-6:00 pm, Yoga, Gym

December 8, Wednesday

9:00 am-1:00 pm, ELC Fall Schedule

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

5:15 pm, Wednesday night meal, Gathering Room

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

6:00 pm, Children's activities, Room 108

6:00 pm, Youth activities, Room 211 & Gym

December 9, Thursday

9:00 am-1:00 pm, ELC Fall Semester Last Day of Classes

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

6:00 pm-GSCC A Capella Choir Concert, Sanctuary – No

Thursday Worship

6:00 pm, Mosaic Worship, Back Forty Warehouse

December 10, Friday

11:00 am-12:00 pm, Ladle of Love, Portico



The Poinsettias on the Altar
are in honor of our "At-Home" Members.

Week of November 28, 2021

*In Person Total *184 Overall Total 671

Online Viewer Total 325 Mosaic *0

Thursday *0 Adult Sunday School *22

Celebration *32/157 Traditions *81/168

Children *0 Youth *0 UMW *

Bible Study Groups *0/0 Other *

General Offering Budget \$15,200.00

General Offering Received \$12,428.00

YTD General Offering Budget \$729,600.00

YTD General Offering Rec'd \$617,919.00

2022 pledges: 58 for \$238,606.00

Text to Give: 256.344.8464



Dec 5 Shannon Campbell,
Matthew Vance, Savannah New

Dec 6 Anna Katharine Hollingsworth,
Erica Shumate, John Waid

Dec 7 Margie Freeman, Austin Waits

Dec 8 Benilda Kelley, Judith Astrello

Dec 9 Caroline Culp, Kailie Jackson

Dec 10 Debbie Hiltz, Debbie Leach,

Jamie Bowers, Bobby Hayes,

Noah Sherrouse

Dec 11 Bonda Vance, Bryant Grizzell,

Sylvia Johnson, Kimberly Hayes,

Allison Hayes, Emma Smith

Honorariums and Memorials

General Budget Fund

In memory of Tomilyn Isbell, given by The Ralph Culp Family

In memory of Andrea Casey, given by Jerry Casey.

Ladle of Love

In memory of Bill Campbell, given by Jack and Sunita Graves

Immediate Prayer Concerns

Ken Davis Jan Humphrey Jerry McGinnis Nancy Smith

Susan Swann Bryant Grizzell Sandy Self

Continued Prayer Concerns

Lisa Dobbins Stan Walker Carma Rayburn

Ann Elizabeth Casey (great-granddaughter of Dotty Ivey)

Mikey Tonagel (Collins & Belinda Tackaberry's son-in-law)



Poinsettias

Select the Worship Service and Date / Cost \$20.00 each

Service: ☐ Celebration ☐ Tradition

Date: ☐ December 12 ☐ December 19

Donated by

☐ In Honor of ☐ In Memory of

Name