



# THE LANTERN

SAINT GILES  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MINI NEWSLETTER # 40  
DECEMBER 23RD, 2020

## Important Dates At-A-

### Thursday, December 24

9am Christmas Eve Hike at Umstead  
State Park, weather permitting

*Be sure to tune in to the recorded  
Christmas Eve Service of carols and scripture!*

### Sunday, January 3

9:30am Adult Sunday School—Zoom  
10:30am Intentional Interim Presentation  
with Lance—Zoom

### Sunday, January 10

9:30am Intentional Interim Presentation  
with Lance—Zoom

### Wednesday, January 13

12pm Session Packet Deadline

### Sunday, January 17

9:30am Adult Sunday School—Zoom

### Please note:

The church office will be closed  
Thursday, December 24th,  
Friday, December 25th, Thursday,  
December 31st, and Friday,  
January 1st.

*May you all have a happy holiday season!*

Emmie will be in the church office on  
Mondays, Tuesdays, and every other Friday.

Lance's work week will be Sunday through  
Thursday. Most weeks he will be in the  
office Monday through Wednesday.

Session guidelines ask that if you need to be  
in touch, please call or email, and if you  
must stop by, please wear a mask and make  
office visits brief. Thank you for considering  
the safety of our staff members!

## Intentional Interim Update

It feels like Christmas, and yet it does not feel like Christmas. Most of the things we normally do in our house for Christmas are happening... planning to participate in worship (virtually); remembering Christmas carols and listening to Christmas radio stations; wrapping and shipping presents although we shipped a lot more this year; baking; the feelings of anticipation for Christmas morning; and the hope for some snow. And yet it does not feel like Christmas. There will be no extended family in the house this year... no huge grocery bill; the laughter, special foods, and playing games with the nephews will be absent; no Cribbage matches between the grandparents and grandchildren; and the good feelings of just being together are not going to be possible.

For some, Christmas is emotionally stressful every year, and for most, it's never perfect. Our Christmas story actually reminds us that God comes into the messiness and imperfection of our lives. Who would ever imagine that God would come in a messy stable with no fanfare except the noise of animals and voices of hopeful parents filled with anticipation and awe. This year is especially hard for many reasons. And the good news of Christmas is the same. God comes to us in the reality of our lives. God is present in our joy and our suffering. The good news does not downplay or deny the suffering of life. Rather it proclaims that our reality which includes both joy and suffering is the place where God is present. I hope that we all are finding God in the midst of the mixture of the usual, the unusual, and the just plain hard times we may be having this Christmas. Christ, the light of the world, is born. May his birth among us bring hope, peace, joy and love.

Advent and Christmas blessings!

Lance

## Habitat for Humanity's *Presbyterian Build 2020 Update*

It was just October when we joined the local Presbyterian coalition and Habitat for Humanity to start a new home alongside Tenina Kennedy and her family. See how far it has come! The home is in the "rough in" stage with drywalling coming soon after the last few windows are installed. While Habitat Wake cannot use our volunteer labor yet, the church donated \$2,000 toward this affordable housing project. Please pray for the building efforts, and contact Tom Augspurger (jillandtom@aol.com, 919-744-8510) if you would like to be more deeply involved with Habitat Wake -- you can learn more about their 2020 building partnerships with volunteers like us here:



## Christmas Eve Worship

Our worship committee and staff have planned to record a simple worship service for Christmas Eve.

This service will resemble an abbreviated service of lessons and carols and will conclude with the lighting of candles. Each family is encouraged to sing along at home and have a candle ready to light while we all sing Silent Night.

In a challenging year when we cannot be together to see the light fill the sanctuary, we light candles at home proclaiming that the light of Christ still “shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome



## Christmas Eve Hike

In keeping with our lovely St. Giles' tradition, we will meet on Christmas Eve morning to hike the Potts Branch Trail in Umstead State Park. Arrive at 9:00am in anticipation of beginning the hike at 9:15.

Due to (I bet you can guess!), COVID-19, this will be a very simplistic hike. Shelters at Umstead are not available for public use and out of an abundance of caution we have decided to forego serving hot chocolate and coffee. Please bring your mask and a water bottle for the hike.

After the hike (10:15-ish for those who may not want to hike), Rev. Lance Perry, our interim minister, will share a few words along with the Christmas story. If the weather cooperates we will close the event with a few instrumental performances from some of our members - so keep your fingers crossed that it does!

Thank you! We hope you will join us. (In case we need to cancel due to inclement weather, keep an

## **Intentional Interim Ministry Presentation**

What is intentional interim ministry? How long does it take? What will we do? Rev. Perry will be offering a Zoom presentation on January 3 and 10 to explain the process. There will be time for questions and discussion. A Zoom link will be sent in The Lantern. Plan to login!

## Virtual Alternative Gift Market

Why not do some holiday gift shopping while connecting to our partners in missions! St. Giles' provides financial support and volunteers to many missions, some of which have opportunities for holiday donations. While we've been less hands-on with missions through covid, we are very much still hearts-on! Check out these opportunities.

**St. Giles Pastor's Discretionary Fund** Our church provides gift cards for food and funds for electric bills to our neighbors in times of need. You can donate to the fund through a check to the church with "Pastor's Discretionary Fund" in the memo line. If you would like to make your donation into a holiday gift, please include a note with the name, address, and message for the recipient and we'll send them a card.



**Rise Against Hunger** is growing a global movement to end hunger by empowering communities, nourishing lives and responding to emergencies.



We have packaged food with them in the past, will again, and they are hosting an online Christmas market: <https://act.riseagainsthunger.org/event/meet-the-need-market/e302437>

**Meals on Wheels** provides nutritious meals to people 60 years old and over who are homebound and/or disabled, or would otherwise be unable to maintain a balanced meal. They will mail a special Holiday card about your donation to your honoree(s). Cards can be purchased for \$20 each.



### **Urban Ministries of Wake County**

responds to neighbors in crisis by providing food, medicine and shelter. They have Holiday Cards (\$7 each or you can



### **Epiphany Sunday - January 3**

St. Giles worship ministry team has decided to do something special for Epiphany this year. Soon, each family will receive "star words" in the mail. Star words have been used by churches on Epiphany as a way to reflect on how God is made manifest in our lives and in the world. Just as the Magi looked to a star to find the infant Jesus, we will be invited to reflect on our star word during the 2021 year. There will be enough star words for each family member to have a different word. On Epiphany Sunday during communion, each family will be invited to pick one of their star words trusting that it will be one that will invite them to see God in ways they have not seen God before. All will be invited to put their star words in a place where we will see it regularly and during the year we

### **Directory Update**

Marti Ranney has moved. If you would like her new phone number and address, please contact the church office! She appreciates calls and cards.