

December 2025



WASHINGTON  
STREET

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# Connections

wsmethodist.org

## Sing-Along *Messiah* 2025

In 1741, George Frideric Handel composed Handel's *Messiah* in just 24 days with text compiled from the King James Bible. Despite an average reception after its debut performance in April of 1742, Handel's work would become increasingly popular and is now one of the most frequently performed choral works in all of Western music. *Messiah* tells the full story of Jesus Christ from the prophets announcing his coming birth to his crucifixion and ascension into heaven. As we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth, Handel's most treasured work

is a great reminder of what the Advent Season is truly about. And nearly 300 years after its completion, we are happy to be able to bring *Messiah* to life right here at Washington Street United Methodist Church.

Many years ago, former WSUMC music director Arletta Raley had a chance encounter with Dr. Lillian Quackenbush while the two were attending a New York City choral director's convention. This meeting of the minds would result in the creation of the annual Sing-Along *Messiah* performance. A showing of Handel's *Messiah* that is open to everyone and encourages the audience to sing along with the performers.

Every year since 2002, our music program has put on Sing-Along *Messiah* with the help of local musicians, singers, and music programs willing to contribute instruments, time and talent. We also would like to thank our



*S.A.M founder Arletta Raley*

amazing Sing-Along *Messiah* committee who works tirelessly year after year to make sure the performance goes off without a hitch.

This year's show will be in the Washington Street Sanctuary on December 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. Tickets are free but are first come, first served. Doors open at 6 pm so be sure to get here early to secure your seats!

This showing of S.A.M will be dedicated to Arletta, who tragically passed away on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025. She spent over 30 years as music director at WSUMC and had a long and fruitful career as a music educator outside of the church. Arletta was born to make music, and we are very blessed she chose to do so here at Washington Street. While we miss her dearly, we will use this year's Sing-Along *Messiah* to celebrate her creative spirit and love of music and we hope that you all will do the same.

We hope to see you all on December 15<sup>th</sup>, and look forward to singing through the story of Christ as a united congregation.



### **Congratulations to Myra Price for being ABC Quality's Childcare Hero of the Month!**

### **WSUMC Library Now Open**

Starting in December 2025, the WSUMC Library will be open daily from 9 am until 4 pm. While there will be library assistants available on most days, you are also free to explore the library by yourself.

The near 3000 books in our library are catalogued on the Librarika system which you will need to be registered with in order to borrow books. If you are in our REALM system you will soon receive an email message from Librarika entitled "Invitation to join the Washington Street UMC Library." Joining is very easy; you just need to click on the link given in the email and follow the instructions. Once you have joined, you will be able to search the online library system. Non-WSUMC members may join too but they will need to register directly with one of the library assistants.

You may also borrow books by using the sign-out sheet located in the library. Please be sure to follow the instructions so all books are accounted for.

The books are catalogued according to a word-system that is based on the Dewey-Decimal system, but uses word categories. The shelves are all marked with the various categories, but like in the Dewey-Decimal system there may be some overlaps.

We hope you enjoy this beautiful room filled with plenty of knowledge, inspiration, and joy!



### **Christ Chapel Open All of Advent Season**

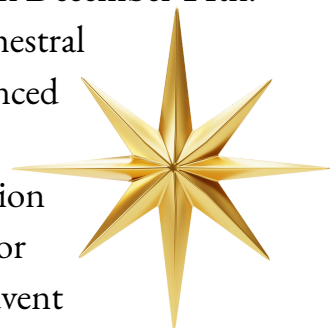
Washington Street UMC will open Christ Chapel for prayer and reflection from November 30th through Christmas Eve. The chapel will be adorned with trees, greenery, and a large crèche generously donated by St. Mark UMC. A table offering a selection of devotional readings, prayers, and a prayer request box will be available for visitors. Recognizing that the Christmas season can be hectic and stressful for many, our intention is to provide the chapel as a place for respite, prayer, and reflection. We encourage you to focus on the true meaning of the season as we prepare for the birth of Jesus. Christ Chapel will be open each Sunday of Advent from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.



### **Christmas Cantata**

The Sanctuary choir and full orchestra, along with Rev. Becky Shirley as narrator, will present *The Word Became Flesh* at the 11am service on December 14th.

In addition to new choral and orchestral compositions, the program is balanced with several familiar hymns, and Christmas carols for the congregation to join in singing. We would love for you to join us for a morning of Advent Season fun and devotion!





New to Advocacy? Need a refresher? Sign up for Advocacy 101



Ready for next steps? Sign up for Advocacy 102: Writing for Change



Sign up for the event using the appropriate QR Code.

## Richland County Burial

On December 8<sup>th</sup> at 2pm there will be a memorial service for several unidentified bodies at the Richland County Cemetery. Washington Street hosted a similar memorial service in June of this year where over 40 members of our congregation were in attendance. While we won't be hosting this upcoming service, we hope that you will still attend. This is an amazing opportunity to help honor those who have no one on this side of heaven to do so.



## Sunday School Updates

**If you aren't involved in a Sunday morning class, take a look at the variety of topics being discussed in Sunday School this month and visit the class or classes that interest you. Each class welcomes all to join them.**

### Aldersgate Class - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor\*

Contact: David Anderson (danderson@richardsonplowden.com)

Starting on October 26<sup>th</sup> the Aldersgate Class will embark on a 6-week journey on Max Lucado's new book *Tame Your Thoughts Three Tools to Renew your Mind and Transform Your Life*. Come join us for a short video and discussion on this topic. Enjoy a cup of coffee and a donut all our welcome as embark on this study series beginning Sunday October 26 and running through November 30.

### Dawsey Class - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor\*

Contact: Demi Garvin (garvindemi@gmail.com)

We continue our new study: Days of Awe and Wonder-How to be a Christian in the 21st Century by Marcus Borg. Hunter Rentz will lead our discussion of Chapter 2. You can join in person or from home via Free Conference Call. To join from home, call in between 9:50 and 10 AM.

The call-in number is (701) 802-5115. The access code is 7252934.

### Grace Class - 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

Contact: Jim Lane (jlane@columbiase.edu)

The Grace Class will discuss the book, *Heaven and Earth: Advent and the Incarnation* by Will Willimon on December 7th through the month of December. In the book, Willimon introduces us to the God who is "bringing heaven to earth and changing everything." In celebrating Advent we "anticipate the earth-shaking, life-transforming good news that God "not only cares about us but is willing to show up among us and do something with us here and now."

### John Harper Class - 1<sup>st</sup> floor\*

Contact: Boyd Saunders (jboydsauanders@aol.com)

The class utilizes Cokesbury's *Adult Bible Studies* each quarter as a guide for class discussions. Each weekly lesson offers background and focal Scriptures, key verses, and doctrinally sound and relevant biblical interpretation and application. This quarter, following the theme "Living Faith", the focal passages come from 1 Corinthians.

### Open Door Class - 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

Contact: Ann Jessup (jessup.ann@gmail.com)

The Open Door Class is studying Tim Keller's *Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ*. This book illuminates the journey into the background of the nativity.

### Paul Harmon Class - 3<sup>rd</sup> floor\*

Contact: Sally Mings (sallymings@gmail.com)

The Paul Harmon Class is reading and discussing *The Book of Joy*, by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Douglas Abrams. Visitors are always welcome!

### Solomon's Porch Class - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Contact: Rev. Adrienne Fink (ajhamm@umcsc.org)

For Advent, Solomon's Porch is using *The Redemption of Scrooge* study by Matt Rawle to look at Advent through the lens of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*.

\*subject to change

## MLK Weekend of Service

As followers of Christ whose words in Matthew 25: 40 say "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." we invite you to join us for Operation: In As Much - an opportunity of serving our neighbors over the Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, January 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>. You'll be able to choose from a list of diverse service projects and select the times over the weekend that best suits your schedule. The list of projects and times will be posted soon via all our communication channels. For more information, contact Andrea Mcatee at acmcatee21@gmail.com.





# Youth Advent Events

**December 13<sup>th</sup> @ 2pm** Cookie Decorating in the Youth Room  
**December 14<sup>th</sup> @ 4pm** Christmas Caroling will meet at the church  
**December 21st @ 10am** Jesus's Birthday Party in Youth Room

## Soup Cellar Donations

Here at Washington Street our Soup Cellar Ministry, made up of volunteers from several local churches, has been serving lunch to those who would normally go without for nearly 50 years. Every day our volunteers show up with a smile on their face ready to serve our ever increasing number of Soup Cellar patrons. But no matter how dedicated they are they would not be able to function without your help!

In November, the Women in Faith Circle 2 Group of Washington Street UMC asked our congregation to donate food goods and money to our Soup Cellar pantry. And you all graciously answered the call! We received so much food, we could barely fit it all into one photo! Thanks to your contributions, our Soup Cellar volunteers will be able to continue feeding those in need for the foreseeable future! Those interested in donating time, money, or food goods to the Soup Cellar may contact Terrence Chisholm at 803-256-2417 (ext. 132.)



## Volunteer Tax Preparers Needed!

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program has been an invaluable service provided by The Cooperative Ministry that offers services to individuals and families with low to moderate incomes who are eligible for tax credits. Since 2010, the local program has prepared over 70,000 tax returns for families with young children, senior adults, those with disabilities, and many more, resulting in refunds of more than \$88 million. These refunds are distributed directly to families, enabling them to pay bills and save for the future. Entering its sixteenth year of service, The Cooperative Ministry needs 40 additional volunteers for the 2026 tax season. A commitment of three to four hours per week is desired. There are 10 convenient VITA site locations throughout the Columbia area, offering a flexible schedule that includes weekdays, evenings, and weekends. No experience is required, and some VITA volunteer opportunities don't involve preparing taxes. WSUMC member, Cindy Cox, has been a VITA volunteer for many years. "I find the experience rewarding. Clients are incredibly appreciative and Cooperative Ministry staff provides effective training and support. It's fulfilling to be part of a team that empowers our community by bringing them important financial resources."

Interested?

Please email Cindy Cox at [ckcrg@bellsouth.net](mailto:ckcrg@bellsouth.net) if you'd like to talk more about her experience or The Cooperative Ministry at [vita@coopmin.org](mailto:vita@coopmin.org) or visit [www.coopmin.org/vita](http://www.coopmin.org/vita) for more information.





## Be Cautious of Scam E-Mails!

Please be advised, there have been a number of e-mails being sent out from people posing as members of Washington Street UMC staff. These e-mails will often ask you to do something without actually speaking to a member of our team. Most likely this would involve you giving away valuable information or your money.

Those who receive one of these suspicious e-mails should check the account it was sent from. If the account does not end with @wsmethodist.org or @umcsc.org, it is a fake and should be disregarded.

Please contact our Communications Coordinator, Jacob Valdez, if you have any questions regarding potential spam e-mails at jacob@wsmethodist.org.

Scam e-mails are especially prevalent during the holiday season, so please be careful!

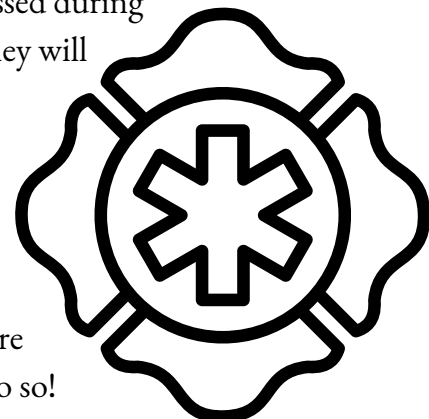
## Active Faith Crèche Display

From now until December 15th, you are invited to view the Active Faith Crèche Display located in the Wesley Room! While every crèche depicts the birth of Jesus Christ, each one is unique and reflects the perception of the people who crafted it. If you need a reminder of what this time of year is truly about, please come by! The full display will return during the Advent Season of 2026.



## Help Honor our First Responders

While many of us are fortunate enough to get time off of work and school during the holiday season, there are those who have to work more during this time of year. First responders and public servants are critical to keeping people safe, and usually spend Christmas apart from their families because of it. So please join our Active Faith group in honoring these hardworking folks by donating cookies and other homemade treats! Bring all treats to church with you on Sunday December 21<sup>st</sup> so they may be blessed during our Sunday service. They will then be distributed on Christmas Eve by our Active Faith members. A small gesture can go a long way so we encourage those who are able to participate to do so!





## Ways to Stay Connected at Washington Street!

### WORSHIP



December 18th  
11:00 - 11:30 AM  
Christ Chapel

Filled with familiar hymns, an interactive Jesus story, and communion, this service is especially friendly to persons living with dementia and their care partners.

The W.E.L.L. - A Place for Worship  
- Encouragement - Laughter & Love

### MOVIE DISCUSSION

There will be no movie discussion meeting this month due to the busy schedule of the Advent Season. Meetings will resume as normal starting in January.

Those interested in attending future movie discussions may contact Rev. Alston at [aflippert@umcsc.org](mailto:aflippert@umcsc.org).

### FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Stay up to date on everything Washington Street by following us on social media!



### YoPro (Young Professionals)

If you are between the ages of 25 & 45, use the QR code on this page to join YoPro on Group Me! Through the app, you will get updates about events and any last minute schedule changes.

Here's a look at what is planned for this month:

Thursday, December 4th @ 6PM: Game Night in Youth Room

Monday, December 15th @ 6PM: YoPro will meet for Sing Along *Messiah*

UMC Young Professionals



Join on GroupMe

## Help Wanted!

We are looking for a Business Operations Manager! The person in this position would be responsible for maintaining the varied functions of our church and making sure it receives the upkeep that it needs. The ideal candidate for this roll has strong organizational skills, ability to maintain confidentiality, availability for evening committee meetings, and the ability to manage a complex organization and its people. This is a full-time, in-person position. Those interested should scan the QR code to apply!



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