



THE MESSENGER
FIRST METHODIST CHURCH SPLENDORA
DECEMBER 2024

Who Worship Passionately, Love Extravagantly



PASTOR'S MESSAGE

My Advent Story

Rev. Steven G. Lightfoot

Advent is a season of expectation and hope. We celebrate the first advent or “coming” of the Christ Child, and we hope for the second advent, the second coming, of Christ the King. It is a time where we look for deliverance from the struggles and strife of the world and set our eyes on the light of Christ. We hope for peace... not only for peace in our surroundings and in the world, but for peace within.

When I was a younger man, leading Marines in combat in the deserts of Kuwait and Iraq, I found myself looking for peace in the midst of chaos; on a cool December night, in a fighting hole dug deep into the desert sands of the Kuwaiti border. The ground war was imminent, and the atmosphere was intense, with SCUD and FROG missiles impacting our vicinity and the whoosh of outbound HAWK and PATRIOT missiles launching to intercept or retaliate.

As we sat in our holes, with nothing to do but wait and reflect, every man was faced with the reality of his own

mortality and with the knowledge that soon we would be breaching the minefields that lay between us and the liberation of Kuwait. Not a wonderful place to spend Christmas.

At that time in my life I knew about Jesus, but I didn't know him personally. I also knew that I had a responsibility to lead my Marines, and that responsibility included getting them through the war with mind, body, and spirit intact. There in my fighting hole with several of my men, I could see the anxiety in their faces. I could also see the vastness of the night sky above with stars in such magnificent abundance that it brought to mind a Christmas card that I had seen when I was a child... with the magi in the desert following a bright star set in a sea of blackness. It was one of those foil cards and its shimmering image captivated my imagination. There was comfort in that memory, but there was conviction too.

(Pastor's Message continues page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Red Cross care packages had provided small, camo-covered Bibles, with only Psalms, Proverbs and The New Testament included. I pulled one out of

my field pack and opened it to Psalms. It wasn't long before I came across Psalm 91, and as I read it the part that especially spoke to me was this:

⁵ You will not be afraid of the terror by night,

Or of the arrow that flies by day;

⁶ Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,

Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.

*⁷ A thousand may fall at your side
And ten thousand at your right hand,
But it shall not approach you.*

*⁸ You will only look on with your eyes
And see the recompense of the wicked.*

*⁹ For you have made the LORD, my
refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place.*

*¹⁰ No evil will befall you,
Nor will any plague come near your tent.*

The sense of peace that came over me was as powerful as anything I had ever experienced. I was so overcome with the sense of it, that I read the entire Psalm aloud to the Marines around me. Some wept silently. Some stared quietly up at the night sky. But all felt the sense of peace, peace within the power of the Holy Spirit. Gone were the faces of anxiety. As I made my way around the perimeter, visiting with each Marine in their fighting holes, sharing the Psalm, the same peace was apparent.

Now this is just my opinion, mind you, but I think that one of the first steps in salvation, in my experience anyway, is the surrendering of self and the allowing of the peace of Christ Jesus to enter your heart. That experience in the desert paved the way for my becoming a Christian after the war. That advent season, for me, was the peaceful beginning of a season of expectation and hope, which ultimately led to the coming of Christ in my life.

Psalm 91 will forever be deeply ingrained in the meaning of advent for me. It represents all that I know about the promise of hope, of light and of

peace... deep internal, down-to-your-soul peace... that only comes, by grace, from the Prince of Peace: Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

By His Grace,
Pastor Steven†



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1st- First Sunday in Advent

Holy Communion Sunday 9AM*

Communion Rail Gifts go to

Good Samaritan Fund

Sunday School 10:15AM

8th- Second Sunday in Advent 9AM*

Sunday School 10:15AM

Board of Stewards Meeting 12:45PM

15th- Third Sunday in Advent 9AM*

Sunday School 10:15 AM

21st- Food Pantry Day 9AM

Christmas Angels Party 12:30PM

Volunteers needed

22nd- Fourth Sunday in Advent 9AM*

Sunday School 10:15AM

24th- Christmas Eve Service 6:30PM*

25th- Christmas Day

Happy Birthday Jesus

29th- Laity Sunday Service 9AM*

Sunday School 10:15AM

****In-person and Live Stream Services***



**DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES
AND BIRTHDAYS**

- 5 **Joanna Bonnette**
- 7 **Chantel Swift**
- 8 **Joe Melton**
- 9 **Susanne Graves**
- 10 **Penny Eckhardt**
- 10 **Nathan Jackson**
- 10 **Matt & Allyson Welch**
- 11 **Sue Vasquez**
- 12 **Ruby Councill**
- 12 **Kevin Hendry**
- 12 **Steven Patterson**
- 14 **Fred Daniels**
- ♥ 14 **Tiffany Hendry**
- 19 **Sybil Baker**
- 20 **Sharon Ipes Soileau**
- 20 **Amy Jackson**
- 23 **Mawana Jones**
- 24 **Allyson Welch**
- 25 **Jesus of Nazareth**
- 26 **Sandy Councill**
- 30 **Sherry Stallings**
- 30 **Darren & Ashley Grupa**
- 31 **Christie Hantelman**
- 31 **Craig & Sarah Moore**

♥ **REJOICE!**
REJOICE! EMMANUEL
♥ **SHALL COME TO THEE**
O ISRAEL!

CHRISTMAS ANGELS PARTY

Mark your calendars for December 21st at 12:30PM for the Christmas Angels Christmas Party. This is one of our major ministries at FMCS. Through Splendora Schools, we receive the names of children in need. We provide them with Christmas gifts and a party. In this ministry we not only provide gifts,

but also the Gift of Jesus.

Volunteers will need to be ready at 11:30AM that day to prepare for the event. Contact Tess (346)261-6478.

To see the look on the children's faces is priceless. Let our church show love to the kiddos in our community and the Light of Jesus. Please offer your time to help with this amazing ministry.

**CANDLELIGHT
SERVICE**

Mark your calendar for our Christmas Eve Service, December 24th at 6:30PM.

The congregation at Shepherd

Me

Fir:

you

tra



ll join us here at

ch Splendora. Invite

to this a Christmas

come.

BH

MEETINGS

Bible study and Class Meetings will resume after the New Year. We will start back on a Bible Study and then later start up the Class meetings. We will continue to serve a lite supper with these Wednesday night studies and meetings.

CLASS

CHRISTMAS GIFT GIVING

The Christmas Season is always magical and many times stressful. Sometimes shopping for gifts can take the fun out of the season. Some people don't need another "do-dad."

Perhaps a donation to a non-profit organization in their name may be a gift giving solution.

The Global Methodist Church

continues to embody its mission of compassion and generosity by responding decisively to recent national disasters and global health crises. Contributions to Hurricanes Helene and Milton relief efforts provide essential aid to families and communities working toward recovery.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the ongoing monkeypox outbreak is straining local resources. Continued assistance is vital to address this public health challenge and bring relief to those affected.

In the Philippines, Super Typhoon Man-Yi-- the 6th super typhoon of the year has caused significant devastation. Thousands have been displaced, homes destroyed, and livelihoods disrupted.

Reflection on these efforts, Bishop Scott Jones emphasized the global mission of the church. "Our mission as the Global Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness across the globe. This includes standing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world in their time of need. Our response reflects both our compassion and our commitment to the global nature of our faith."

Gifts may be made online through the Global Methodist Church website: globalmethodist.org or you may mail a check payable to the *Global Methodist Church* at :

Global Methodist Church
PO Box 1360
King George, VA 22485

Through prayer and generosity, we can extend Christ's love, offering tangible aid and hope to those in distress. This opportunity to serve is a testament to the enduring power of faith



ity. Together, let us shine
he darkness, glorifying God
actions and lifting up those

*e Global Methodist Website;
Dianne Burnett.*



Merry Christmas

PRAYER
REQUESTS

"One day Jesus told his disciples a story to illustrate their need for constant prayer and to show them that they must never give up."

--Luke 18:1

Lovada Linquist - Comfort & Peace
 Ramona Ferguson - Pending surgery
 Bob Guttenberger - Peace
 The Smart Family - Peace
 Duke, Shugart, Masterson Families -
 Faith & Health
 Erica & Stephen Dewey – Travel
 Mercies
 Angel Van Ostrand - Healing
 Mawana Jones - Healing
 Merle Fritz - Healing
 Sage Herr - Healing
 Patti Lyons - Healing
 Gloria Cox - Healing
 William Blake - Health
 Caleb Barroso - Health
 Karl & Sheila Keith
 Garry @ Turbo Valves
 Charlie Kincannon
 Ralph Madonna
 Tommy Johnson
 Annie Adams
 Harry & Shirley Schumaker
 Bob & Shirley Adams
 The Jones Family
 Debbie Szymanski Family
 Unspoken
 Pastor Steven & Family
 Archie' s Prayer Ministry
 Our Country
 World Conflicts
 Daryl - Traveling mercies to Missouri
 David - In a spiritual battle
 Yulissa & Rebecca - For their brother
 Jesus who is grieving the loss of
 his two children
 Bruce - Healing
 Toni - Pray for our nation & children
 Daniel - Healing of body and spirit
 David - CT scan - hoping benign
 Leonardo - Help with immigration
 documents
 Ernest - His job and better finances
 Vickie – Brother Wayne is
 hospitalized

Miriah - Draw her closer to God,
 healing for sick children, and
 wants boyfriend to start going to
 church with her
 Deidra - Help her with her statistics
 class at college
 Venessa - Family health and safety
 Family of Marilyn Sue Williams -
 Comfort & Peace
 Family of Jim Wesphal-Comfort &
 Peace
 Pat Callahan -Comfort & Peace
 Ann Elliott - Continued Healing
 Sandie Hales - Continued Healing
 Soila Sportel - Continued Healing
 Craig & Christie Hantelman -
 Continued healing
 Amy Ricks - Travel mercies
 Erica Ricks Dewey
 Ralph Madonna
 Shirley Madruga
 Alton Moore
 Robert & Mae Bible
 Frankie, Evan & Brooke Jones
 Our church and our church family



shutterstock.com - 2354377255