



# THE BEACON

*"Making disciples for Jesus Christ to share God's love."*

Newsletter of Mt. Nebo United Methodist Church • December 2023

This year as we enter the First Sunday of the Advent Season, our reading from the Gospel of Mark will be Chapter 13, verses 24 through 37.

*24 "But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 "Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. 27 Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. 28 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 30 Truly I tell you this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Beware, keep alert for you do not know when the time will come. 34 It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. 35 Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, 36 or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. 37 And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."*

Many of you may find it strange that our scripture lesson on the First Sunday of Advent starts off with such a dire prophecy about the end times. You may feel, as many do, that we should be reading about the joy of the coming birth of Jesus rather than the doom and gloom of the end times. This belief is common in today's church because the ancient tradition of reading stories of the end of the world as preparation for Advent has long since been abandoned even though it remains in our lectionary readings as a reminder of the deeper meaning of the Advent Season.

Instead of encouraging us to prepare for the

celebration of Christ's birth by decorating, throwing parties and spending lavishly in order to show our friends and family with gifts, the ancient tradition of the church invites us into a period of self-examination and penance. It is the opposite of what the world tells us to do - it is countercultural. It tells us to do the exact opposite of what we find going on in this world. It tells us to prepare for the birth of Jesus into the world and for his coming again by living as people who are prepared to die. This notion definitely lacks the festive holiday spirit. However, it is a vital alternative to what the world offers in preparation for the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into the world and his coming again.

So how can we participate in the coming reign of Christ? That is what the true challenge of Advent is all about. God promises us a new order, the birth of a world in which justice and righteousness rule. Whether we are among those who will be reborn with that world depends upon our commitment and allegiance, in each moment of our lives, to the one true God rather than the false gods we so often honor. God shows us the way in the life and words of Jesus, and gives us companions - our sisters and brothers in Christ. But ultimately, each of us must actively prepare if we are to be part of what is being born at Christmas. So, what do we have to do to prepare?



First of all, we have to prepare ourselves by examining our lives and repenting and turning away from those things that are not life-giving. When we accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we begin to look at the world differently. We begin to prioritize our life around putting our faith in Jesus as first and foremost in our lives. Love and compassion begin to replace our selfish earthly cravings for material wealth and luxury. We begin to

# EPISTLE & CHURCH INFO

## EPISTLE CONT....

see the brokenness of the world more clearly and strive to serve as Disciples of Christ in all aspects of our lives – not just once a week for an hour on Sunday, but every day.

We have to live whatever time we have left on this earth in the ways that Jesus came into this world to teach us. This means that we need to model our lives after the life of Jesus. We should be guided by the Gospel accounts of how Jesus made a difference in the lives of everyone he came into contact with during his ministry. His compassion, his love, his desire to submit fully to the holy will of the heavenly Father and his ultimate sacrifice for our salvation should be a powerful lesson for all of us to follow.

We have to participate in the healing of the world. This means that we need to go out into the world and “live our faith” in the brokenness of the world. We must work to be agents of transformation – seeking to make disciples of everyone we encounter on our faith journey.

We must offer the prospect of the hope, peace, joy, and love that Jesus was born into this world to share. Each week of Advent we light a symbolic candle for one of the four virtues that Jesus brings to us. As we light these candles, we must recommit ourselves to bringing hope to those that have lost hope, bringing peace by being peacemakers in a world torn by war and strife, bringing joy to the faces of those who have been traumatized and have lost the joy that God has intended for all of us. And lastly, by offering radical love in a world that is filled with so much hate.

When we center our lives on service to God, we are given the greatest gift of all - the promise of everlasting life. Isn't it time for you to rethink how you will celebrate the Advent Season? Amen.

*Pastor Bob*

## DECEMBER LITURGISTS:

**December 3 — Jarrell Family**

**December 10 — Riner Family**

**December 17 — Deatrich Family**

**December 24 Worship— Young Family**

**Dec 24 Evening Service — Dorsey Family**

**December 31 — Katie Smith**

## CHURCH INFORMATION

### Church Office Hours:

Monday – Friday 9 a.m.—1 p.m.

Office Phone: 301-432-8741

Mt. Nebo Email: [mt.nebo@myactv.net](mailto:mt.nebo@myactv.net)

Website: [www.mtneboumc.com](http://www.mtneboumc.com)

### Sunday Event Times:

9:00 a.m. Worship Service

10:00 a.m. Sunday School (for all ages)

### Pastor:

Pastor Bob Ruggieri

443-994-9505

Email: [pastorbob2017@gmail.com](mailto:pastorbob2017@gmail.com)

### Staff:

Administrative Secretary – Brandi Puzonia

Minister of Music – Rose Gamblin

Finance – Patty Watson & Shana Wolfe

Sextons/Maintenance – Dennis & Sallie Dorsey  
and Sara Halbritter

### Mt. Nebo Christian Learning Center

Hours: Monday – Friday 6 a.m.—6 p.m.

301-432-6042

[www.mtneboclc.org](http://www.mtneboclc.org)

### Director – Kim Kelly

[director@mtneboclc.org](mailto:director@mtneboclc.org)

### Communications Team:

Toni Wetzel, Katie Smith, Pastor Bob,  
Glenn deShazo, and Brandi Puzonia

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# DECEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

## BIRTHDAYS

December 1	Enzo Gerand Charlotte Leach
December 3	Gary Pryor
December 4	Noah Gollogly
December 7	Jon Gollogly
December 10	Mark Parish
December 13	Sean Gollogly
December 16	Amanda Mathis
December 17	Bob Ruggieri
December 19	Wanda Lowman
December 20	Brittany Harding Jane Lohman Jade Ruggieri
December 22	Faithie Riner
December 23	Jaxon Pugh
December 25	Betty Jones
December 31	Donna Furry

## ANNIVERSARIES

December 10	Dan & Genna Gerand
December 13	Tony & Dianna Basile
December 16	Glenn & Jeannette deShazo



## Follow Mt. Nebo on Social Media

## CHRISTMAS CARDS



Save your stamps!  
The Mt. Nebo Post Office is open on the counter in the Gathering Room!



Facebook:  
[facebook.com/MtNeboUMChurch](https://facebook.com/MtNeboUMChurch)



Instagram:  
[@mtneboumc](https://www.instagram.com/mtneboumc)



YouTube:  
[@mtnebounitedmethodistchurc7749](https://www.youtube.com/@mtnebounitedmethodistchurc7749)

## THANKS-GIVING FOR THANKS-LIVING

Special thanks to everyone who took the time to pack a Shoebox for the Shoebox Ministry and especially a big thank you to Alyssa Berg who organized the ministry, wrapped boxes, and delivered them to the first stop on their long trips to children around the world.

Many thanks to people who do extra jobs around the church like Katie and Tyler Deatrich who fix the sign out front, Cindy and Skip Kauffman who do many, many extra things for Mt. Nebo, and Ann and Cliff Wright who spend most Thursday mornings working at church.

Thank you to all those who took some time to help spread mulch on the CLC playground.

Thank you to everyone who reached out with second mile giving to support the United Methodist Student Day offering.

Thank you to everyone who helped with the hanging of the greens.

# CHURCH NEWS

## MUSIC

### The History of Christmas Carols

In Medieval time, the word “carol” originally referred to a ring-shaped dance. These carols were not specifically linked to Christmas but were festive songs for celebrations throughout the year, and were often from a religious or pagan context.

In the early Christian church, hymns were sung in Latin during religious festivals, including Christmas. One famous example “Veni, Veni, Emmanuel” (O Come, O Come, Emmanuel), which dates back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

Christmas carols began to be more associated with the festive season in the medieval period (13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Century). St. Francis of Assisi is often credited with promoting the singing of Christmas carols in a language that the common people could understand, rather than exclusively in Latin.

During the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century, carols became more popular in Europe, particularly in England, where they were sung during different festive occasions. “The Boar’s Head Carol” and “The First Noel” are examples of carols that date back to this period.

During the Protestant Reformation, when religious reforms took place, carols were discouraged in some regions due to their association with Catholicism. However, they persisted in many communities, evolving with regional influences and often being sung in people’s native languages. *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, composed during this time, is thought to be a memory game or a mnemonic device to help people remember religious teachings during a time when open practice of the Christian faith was discouraged or prohibited. The gifts may have served as reminders of different aspects of the faith.

The Victorian era (19<sup>th</sup> Century) saw a revival of interest in traditional Christmas carols. Several iconic carols we sing today, like “Silent Night” and “O Holy Night,” were composed during this time.

In more modern times (The 20<sup>th</sup> century) Christmas carols gained a solid foot hold with some well-known carols like “White Christmas,” “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,” and “Feliz Navidad.”

Today, a wide range of Christmas carols—ranging from traditional religious hymns to more secular and modern compositions—are enjoyed

## MUSIC Cont...

worldwide. Carols continue to be sung, performed, and cherished during the holiday season, preserving the spirit of Christmas and reminding us of the true meaning of Christmas.



### Music Announcements:

- Nov. 19 Children’s Choir Practice begins after Sunday School
- Dec. 10 Bells perform for church service
- Dec. 17 Christmas Program during service
- Dec. 20 CLC Christmas Program (6:00 pm)
- Dec. 23 Community Choir at Willowbrook Seventh Day Adventist
- Dec. 24 Community Choir at Mt. Nebo
- Dec. 24 Candle Light Service (7:00 pm)

Rose Gamblin



# CHURCH NEWS CONTINUED

## GO FOR BOLD-WELLNESS CLASS

The next wellness class at Mt. Nebo will be on **Wednesday, January 10, 2024**. No class in December. We are all just too busy getting ready for the holidays! Be a part of Washington County's GO FOR BOLD program in 2024! It's a great incentive to begin living a healthy lifestyle and improve your personal wellness! Sign-up sheet for the January class will be up on the bulletin board at the end of December so come on out and join us!

*Patty Watson*



## FINANCIALLY SPEAKING...

I hope everyone has a great Christmas season. It is a very special time of year. We will focus on spending quality time with our families and friends. We as Christians realize the "reason for the season."

Giving is a big part of Christmas. It truly is better to give than to receive. Please include Mt. Nebo in your giving. Hang an extra stocking with Mt. Nebo on it.

Our church's only income is what we put in the collection plate. In essence, Mt. Nebo exists on faith. Faith in God to be with us and in our members to contribute. Please help us to remain the best in the area. Unfortunately, money is the life blood of any business and our church is a business. We are in the business of being disciples for Christ. Please give to Mt. Nebo so it can remain healthy and vibrant.

*God Bless, Skip Kauffman*

## UNITED METHODIST MEN

The Mt. Nebo Men met for breakfast on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November. After the breakfast meeting, four of the men stayed to spread mulch on the CLC playground. We are always glad to help with Trustee projects.

The men will meet on **Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at our regular 8:30 time** for breakfast. After breakfast, we will be delivering small decorative gifts to our church shut-ins. These shut-in visits are a longstanding tradition for the men of our church.

*Bruce Smith*

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

At our recent meeting, Katie shared a devotion about thankfulness. There are well over 100 verses in the Bible that mention thankfulness and she shared a few of them. We were reminded to express our appreciation and gratitude on a daily basis and not just on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday in November, because thankfulness builds positive emotions. Remember to spend time in communication with God and express your thanks every day.

The birthday gifts for residents at Sterling Care are all taken care of for 2024 with the exception of October. Feel free to sign up for that last spot! We made a donation to the Christmas Outreach gifts, as well as a donation toward Share food packages for the families.

To close the meeting, Betty Lou shared a reading written by an Amish woman. It was 45 life lessons that we should all follow as we celebrate growing older.

Our regular monthly meetings occur on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month, with our next one coming up on **Tuesday, December 19 at 10:00am**. At the December meeting, we will have a small Christmas celebration, so please bring a \$5-\$10 gift for a gift exchange as well as a snack or treat to share. We hope you will join us!



# YOUTH AND LEARNING CENTER NEWS

## MT. NEBO YOUTH NEWS

It's a busy time of year for everyone and the youth group has lots of exciting things going on! During the next few weeks, they'll be helping with the Hanging of the Greens, hosting a Parents' Night Out, attending a Chris Tomlin Christmas concert and serving at FaithStep. Mt Nebo's youth are a blessing to our church and to those in the community. Please contact Alyssa Berg or Don Dorsey for more info about the youth group - all youth in 6th-12th grade are always welcome!

*Alyssa Berg*



## MT. NEBO CHRISTIAN LEARNING CENTER

Dear Mt. Nebo CLC School Community,

I hope you're all ready for yet another exciting month here at Mt. Nebo! I cannot believe that December is already here. The first part of our school year has flown by.

As usual, we have December packed with events. And if you are anything like me, your own calendars are filled with holiday shopping, parties, and get togethers. The holidays are supposed to be fun – for everyone! As we rush around this holiday season, we need to be mindful of the effect of our hectic schedules upon our children. Dinners on the run, crowded stores, and long lines are not young children's idea of a good time. These events are often-times stressful for children. You may see changes in your child's behavior such as teary good-byes, aggression, and acting out. So, as you're making your plans, be sure to maintain that quality time with your children too!

**Christmas Spirit Week will be from December 11 – 15<sup>th</sup>!** Check out the calendar on what everyone should wear each day. We are looking forward to a fun-filled week to get us in the holiday mood!

Mark your calendars for our next **PNO** –

## MT. NEBO CLC Cont...

**Parent's Night Out on Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup> from 6 pm to 9 pm.** The cost is \$30 per child. This will be for infants through school age students. This is a great opportunity to do some Christmas shopping or a date night! Signup sheets will be posted by the check in computer by December 1<sup>st</sup> and payment is due by December 8<sup>th</sup>.

Our **Christmas program, The True Meaning of Christmas**, will be on Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm in the sanctuary. Those children in toddler 2, 2's, 2/3's, 3/4's, outdoor and school age classrooms will be participating in this event. More information will be distributed by Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>.

As Christmas approaches, we will be teaching our students about Holiday Traditions Around the World, and the celebration of God's great gift to us – the birth of Christ! I pray that each of you will discover the best gift of all this season!

**Mt. Nebo CLC will be closed from December 25<sup>th</sup> through January 1<sup>st</sup>.** We will re-open on Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>. This break is a great time for you and your kiddos to spend time with friends and family as well as get some much-needed "R&R". During this time, the simplest thing that you can do for your child is just to make sure that they are balancing their screen-time with fun and healthy activities such as riding bikes, playing outside with friends, or spending quality time with their families.

Our staff wishes your family a very Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year!

*Hugs and High Fives, Ms. Kim, Director*



# MISSIONS IN OUTREACH

## SHOEBOX MINISTRY

**THANK YOU** to everyone who wrapped shoeboxes, filled shoeboxes, donated items for shoeboxes, donated money for shipping, and prayed for the children who will receive the shoeboxes! This year, **Mt. Nebo collected 84 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child!** Your generosity will touch children throughout the world this Christmas season!

*Alyssa Berg*



## MICAH'S BACKPACK

The total number of backpack bags being packed at this time is 136. Jena reports that **due to several three-day weekends coming-up, the needed items for donation are cereal bars, Pop-tarts, snack sandwich crackers and there is always a need for macaroni and cheese cups.** Many thanks for all the givers, packers, those loading bags into cars and then delivering the bags to the schools. All the great teamwork is appreciated for this mission. Mt. Nebo is scheduled to help pack on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month.

*Ruth Resh*

Next date for Mt. Nebo will be **December 7 @ 1:00 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church!**

## CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

Mt. Nebo has a Christmas Outreach Ministry each year where we purchase clothing and gifts for children in local families that would have no Christmas. There are posters up in the gathering room and post-it notes are available for your convenience to record the family # and the child you are purchasing gifts for.

### Instructions:

Wrapping the gifts is greatly appreciated and if you do wrap the gifts, please label them with post-it notes (**not scotch tape**), with the child and family # (*For Example: Family #3, boy 6*).

We will be storing the gifts on the third floor. There is a designated area for each family. If you cannot take the gifts up you may leave them in the church office or parlor and one of us will put them on the third floor.

### Monetary Donations:

Another way to participate is by making a monetary donation. If shopping is not your thing or you prefer to stay away from the crowded stores, you may place your donation in an envelope marked for this ministry. One of the outreach team will use those funds to purchase items not chosen by others. Please make your check out to Mt. Nebo and Christmas Outreach on memo line.

**PLEASE TURN IN ALL GIFTS (Wrapped or not) AND MONEY BY DEC. 10<sup>th</sup>!**

### Preparing:

If you enjoy wrapping and are willing to help, please join some elves on **Thursday, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> at 9 am** to put the finishing touches on all of the presents.

If you have any questions, you may contact Ann Wright at 301-992-7216.

*Ann Wright*

## MISSION MOUSE

It's December and members of Mt. Nebo are busy purchasing and wrapping gifts for children of families in our area whose children don't have winter jackets or clothes and would not get any gifts. Join in the Christmas spirit of giving a gift that reaches beyond your family and friends through the **Christmas Outreach Program**. It is the spirit of giving that makes Christmas. Just think of the gift that God gave to all of us.



# PICS AROUND MT. NEBO



**WORSHIP  
MOMENTS**



**SPREADING MULCH FOR THE CLC**



# PICS AROUND MT. NEBO



## HANGING OF THE GREENS

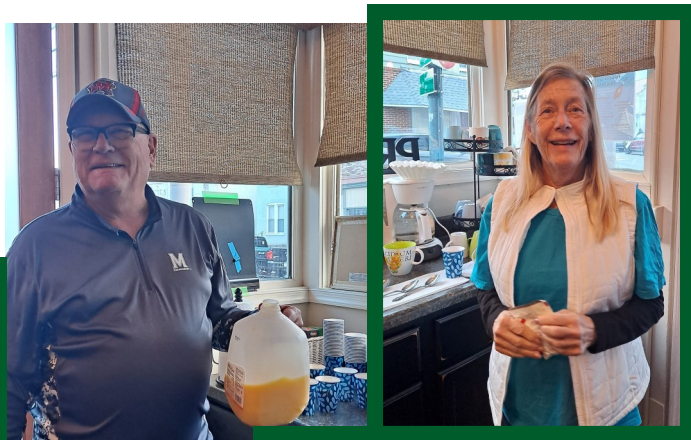


# PICS AROUND MT. NEBO

## CLC HALLOWEEN PARADE



## COMMUNITY MINISTRY PICS



## FAITHSTEP



# December 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
BAAA and Jr Warrior Basketball in FLC every M/W 6-8p Tu 8-9:30p Th 7-9p					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> VIM Dinner (FLC) 12p-4p  Parents Night Out (FLC) 5-8p
<b>3</b> <b>1st Sunday of Advent</b>  9a Worship 11a Children Choir	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 8:30a UMM Breakfast  FLC Occupied 11a-4p
9a-5p Santa Workshop in Nursery for the CLC						
<b>10</b> <b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b> 9a Worship w/ bells <b>Christmas Outreach Due</b> 11a Children Choir	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 6:30p Advent Bible Study  6p Girl Scouts  6:30p Advent Bible Study	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 9a Christmas Outreach Wrapping  Choir 6p Bells 7p	<b>15</b>  Newsletter Info Due	<b>16</b> 7:30a FaithStep  8a SHARE Pickup
<b>17</b> <b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b>  9a Worship w/ Christmas Program	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 10a UMW Meeting  6:30p Advent Bible Study	<b>20</b> NO Basketball  6p CLC Christmas Program (Sanctuary)	<b>21</b>  Choir 6p Bells 7p	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> <b>4th Sunday of Advent</b> 9a Worship 7p Christmas Eve Family Service	<b>25</b> <i>Merry Christmas</i> 	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
Church Office Closed/NO Basketball						
<b>31</b> 9a Worship						

**Mt. Nebo United Methodist Church**  
**134 S. Main Street**  
**Boonsboro, MD 21713**

**Change Service Requested**

