



Friday, Dec. 4, 2020

Greetings Paragould FUMC,

**THIS SUNDAY** As you have heard by now, on Monday morning this week we had a staff member test positive for COVID-19 after being around other staff on Sunday. Staff are trying to limit our contact this week in the case we might be contagious. Therefore this Sunday, Dec. 6, worship will be streaming only at 9am and 11am ([fumcparagould.org/worship--streaming.html](http://fumcparagould.org/worship--streaming.html)). As I mentioned in a previous email, I am sorry for these setbacks and rescheduling. We have had a little bad luck with positive tests. Of course that's a reflection of the rate of spread in Greene County. Please be careful and stay safe.

This Sunday is the Second Sunday of Advent! We will continue with the theme of "In Light & Darkness" with a focus on Luke 1:26-38. Here we read about the call of Mary who is named as "Favored One." Last week we considered the call and response of Joseph and how we turn our attention to mother of Jesus, the Virgin Mary. In early Christian thought Mary was given the moniker "Theotokos" which is translated as "God-bearer" or "Mother of God." Mary is chosen for this unique task of bearing the Son in and through the power of the Spirit. This week I am drawn to this phrase in Luke's telling, "the power of the Most High will overshadow you." As we consider Light and Dark this Advent, I wonder how we might understand this phrase. What does it mean for the power of God to "overshadow" you? Is this unique to Mary? Or have we had similar experiences? We'll consider this and more during worship this Sunday!

**ADVENT DEVOTIONAL | WEDNESDAY STUDY & PRAYER** Continue with your "In Light & Darkness" devotional. Join pastors and other FUMC members for online study and prayer each Wednesday (9am and/or 6pm) during Advent via ZOOM. You'll receive the electronic invitations by email each week.

Wed. Dec. 9; Wk 2 Reflection: Matt 1:18-24 & Lk 1:26-38

Wed. Dec. 16; Wk 3 Reflection: Luke 2:2-14

Wed. Dec. 23; Wk 4 Reflection: Luke 2:15-20

Wed. Dec. 30; Wk 5 Reflection: John 1:1-18

**FILL THE BOX, SHARE THE LIGHT** Remember to pick up your box to fill with Christmas goodies for friends and neighbors in need! Boxes can be picked up in the Welcome Center including instructions and are due back on Dec. 18. Make someone's Christmas by building a box (or two!) as we share with others!

**LIVING NATIVITY** Mark you calendars and pray for good weather on Sunday, Dec. 20 6-7PM for a drive-by celebration of the Christmas Nativity. Kaylee will be working with upper-elementary, middle, and junior high students (and their animals?!) to offer a safe reenactment of the Christmas story. The scene will be on display behind the Welcome Center as ushers guide you to drive by the scene at a distance!

Assuming other staff remain healthy, I \*expect\* on Mon., Dec. 7, we'll return to the following schedule:

1. FUMC campus open for business during the week including social distance & facemasks
2. Witt House continues to operate under strict safety guidelines
3. Sunday 9am & 11am services will be streaming only
4. Sunday 10am abbreviated in-person service in the Sanctuary. This service will include no singing and will be more contemplative and prayer-focused. We will keep total attendance less than 50 and encourage people to pre-register. (<https://www.fumcparagould.org/register.html>)

5. Wednesdays 4-6pm FUMC Sanctuary is open for prayer. Lights will be low. Candles will be lit. A time for reflection in our sacred place of worship.

Please continue to hold our church in prayer. This week we have had two more deaths and funerals in our church: Jackie Dudley and Jeanne Wilcockson. Please hold the Dudley and Wilcockson families in prayer. These deaths are a reminder of the fragility of life. This year's pandemic has drawn our mortality into focus. At the same time, we are learning again to cherish the most important facets of life including our faith in God and our relationships with one another. Those two graces continue to sustain me and pray the same for you.

Grace & Peace,  
Rev. Dane



**WEEKLY RESOURCES**

1. 9am Order of Worship
2. 11am Order of Worship
3. [Children's Ornament Craft 2nd Week of Advent](#)