

FOREST FIRE

The Monthly Newsletter of Forest Heights United Methodist Church
863 West Forest Ave., Jackson, TN 38301
December 2025

A Word from Pastor Drew

Martha Sterne, an Episcopal priest in East Tennessee, has written of a midwife friend of hers named Julia who has delivered countless babies and who marvels at the birth, the incarnation, of Jesus:

“You know,” Julia says, “we humans are pretty much alike. When we come into this world, you can’t really tell us apart. You can’t tell what nationality we are – or what our daddies and mamas do for a living or whether we’ll be Einstein or Lebron James or Mother Theresa. We’re all just kind of purple and a little dazed, like people arriving from a long trip – which we are, of course. And then we breathe and – in a flash – turn all rosy and flushed with life. Isn’t that a miracle? And, suddenly, there we are in the fullness of being!”

On that holy night when Jesus was born, the amazing thing isn’t that God did anything so different. No, what we celebrate is that God did something so, so ordinary. God was born, just like you, just like me. Through one of us, to all of us.

This Christmas, for all that we have done to prepare for that night, (and maybe in spite of all that we have done to prepare for that night), God is slipping back into this world again through the wondrous goodness of a child being born who is more like us than not. Thank God!

There is such good news in this event. Once again, because of this child’s birth, there is hope for this weary world. There is a possibility that was not there before, and a joy that even heaven has to celebrate. For God has come in human flesh and dwelt among us. There is no sorrow of ours that he does not know, and no joy of ours that he cannot appreciate.

He is the fulfillment of all our Christmas hopes. Better than we expected and more than we deserve. God is with us. Christ is born.

A very Merry Christmas season to everyone. A very Merry Christmas to you all!

Pastor Drew

Friendship Marcia Law



TJ asked me to write something about myself for the newsletter, so here it is. It feels a little awkward to write so much about myself.

I was born in Florence, Alabama, but my family, Mom, Dad, my younger brother Mark, and I moved to Memphis when I was 5. Mark and I had an idyllic childhood. Our family wasn't rich by any means, but Mom was home with us when we were young. We rode bikes and played outside with the neighborhood kids. Our elementary and junior high school was just around the corner, so we walked to school. My home church, Underwood UMC, was also within walking distance, although we usually rode in the car to church.

I graduated as a junior from Overton High School in 1974. I took my senior English class in the summer and then was fortunate enough to get to go to Lambuth College. I didn't really know what I wanted to do with my life. Like many young people, I had the vague idea that I wanted to help people. I ended up graduating with a degree in Social Work in 1978.

After graduating from Lambuth I found a job as an intake worker on the Children and Youth Unit at Lakeside Hospital and later moved with that program to St. Joseph's Hospital in Memphis. These were locked psychiatric units. During this time, I started to realize what a sheltered life I had led. After a couple of years, I began to feel some burnout, so I tried my hand at a brief and very unsuccessful sales career trying to sell dictation equipment. My personality is totally unsuited for sales, and that lasted only a few months. Afterwards I decided to get back into social work and took a job as the intake worker at the Frayser-Millington Mental Health Center. That's where I met my husband, Steve!. I probably should clarify that I was taking the job that he was leaving, although it would be more fun to let you wonder about that.

Steve and I dated for about 8 months and got married in May, 1982. Now 43 years later Steve and I have shared many adventures and raised 3 wonderful kids, Matthew, Lauren, and Kathleen. Steve worked for the Post Office. and after several years at the mental health center I "retired" to stay home with the kids. During this time, we started talking about moving to a smaller community to raise our kids. Steve found another job within the Post Office, and we moved to Jackson in early 1991. At that time our neighborhood was filled with families with young children. The kids could run around freely with their friends and during the summers we would buy a swim-only membership at Hidden Valley Golf Course, now Jackson National. We feel like moving to Jackson was one of our best decisions!

Friendship, from one to the other Be blessed

Nurture Area News

Advent Bible Study

Pastor Drew has begun an Advent Bible Study, "*Voices of Advent.*" The study started November 26th and will continue through December 17th. Books are available in the church office at a cost of \$13.00. You can make a check out to Forest Heights, putting "Advent Study" on the memo line. Please see Sue Bryant to get your book.

Young Adult Bible Study

Rev. Harrell Nation is leading a Bible Study that is designed for, but not limited to, young adults. The study is ongoing on Tuesday evenings at 5:30 in the Resource Room upstairs. The current focus is on the New Testament.

Women's Advent Bible Study

On December 1st the women of the church are invited to the Women's Advent Bible Study entitled "Awaiting the Already". This study will take place in the church Fellowship Hall starting at 6:00 p.m. and will be led by our current Financial Secretary, Delores Smith. Books are available at a cost of \$13.00.

Dates to Remember

Our Christmas season contains several special activities to be placed on your calendar.

December 1st starts the Women's Advent Study "Awaiting the Already" at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

December 12th will be the Sojourners Sunday School Class Christmas Party at 6:00 p.m. at Paul and Janette Chaplin's.

On December 14th at 2:00 p.m. Our augmented chancel choir will be presenting our Christmas Cantata, "*Love is Born*" by Loyd Larson. The choir has been augmented with several additional members, both from within and outside our congregation, will be accompanied by an orchestra and several speakers.

On December 19th Church Christmas Caroling. We will start at 4:00 p.m. We will return to the church after caroling for a supper get-together.

On December 21st Forest Heights will have March to the Manger collection at the end of the service. All offerings collected will go to help for church members who might need some assistance. Pastor Drew will administer these funds.

Also on the evening of December 21st, Forest Heights will host Room in the Inn in our gymnasium and Fellowship Hall. More information will be available in the outreach section.

Forest Heights Christmas Eve candlelight service will be December 24th at 4:00 p.m.

December 28th – This will be the cutoff date for the church to receive any offerings intended for 2025.

Remember: You will find all calendar activities listed on the Forest Heights website: fhumc.com. Look under the Events tab for "Upcoming Events".

Blessing for the Thanksgiving season

Forest Heights has been blessed again this Fall to have Cheryl Thomas share her artistic work with the cornucopia gracing our altar. This wonderful arrangement reminds us of the many things we have to be thankful for.



United Women in Faith



Our United Women in Faith have adopted the members of the UofM Lambuth Campus Wesleyan Fellowship. At the November 20th meeting, 35 gift bags for Finals week were filled to be presented to the students attending the Wesleyan Fellowship.

There will not be a December meeting for UWF. The next meeting is scheduled for January 15th.

Sunday School Class Christmas Party

Friday, December 12, 6:00 p.m.
Chaplin Home, 106 Moses Dr.
Bring Finger Food

Preschool Steering Committee

Thank you, Church for the great response to the Food Drive for our Preschool employees. It was greatly appreciated.

Outreach / Missions

Toys for the Reel Foot Christmas Store

On November 21st, 10 members of our congregation traveled to Reelfoot Rural Ministries to

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deliver the toys for their Christmas Toy delivery included the gifts given by the Women in Faith for the Teen Room at Reelfoot.



Store.
United

Room in the Inn

Starting on December 21st, Forest Heights will be hosting Room in the Inn. We will provide supper, an overnight place to sleep, and breakfast for men who otherwise would be without these benefits. We are partnering with Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church to extend this service to our neighbors. Sign-up sheets will be placed on the desk outside the office for you to sign-up to help.

Staff Parish Relations Committee

Staff Christmas Gifts The church will be extending Christmas greetings to the staff this Christmas. If you would like to contribute to this gift, please put your check or cash in an offering envelope and designate it to Staff Christmas. The gifts will be given to each of the staff on December 18th.

Happy Birthday & Anniversary

December Birthdays

9 Jack Finney
10 Elaine Jones
14 Kathleen Wilson
19 Dusty King
19 Ida Tumbaga
19 Kevin Wheatley
24 Marion Gafney

December Anniversaries

24 Carol & Robert Reeves

Calendar for December 2025 - find the **Weekly Calendar** under the “**Events**” tab on fhumc.com

December	1	6:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Women’s Advent Study
December	2	5:30 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Young Adult Bible Study
		6:00 p.m.	Gym	Wheatley Team
December	3	10:00 a.m.	Resource Room	Advent Bible Study
		11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
		12:15 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
		4:30 p.m.	Bell Room	Handbell Practice
		5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Choir Practice
December	7	9:15 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Fellowship Time
		9:30 a.m.		Adult & Youth Sunday School
		11:00 a.m.	Sanctuary	Worship
December	8	10:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Worship Committee
		6:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Women’s Advent Study
December	9	6:00 p.m.	Gym	Wheatley Team
December	10	10:00 a.m.	Resource Room	Advent Bible Study
		11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
		12:15 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
		4:30 p.m.	Bell Room	Handbell Practice
		5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Choir Practice
December	12	6:00 p.m.	Chaplin Home	Sojourner’s SS party
December	14	9:15 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Fellowship Time
		9:30 a.m.		Adult & Youth Sunday School
		11:00 a.m.	Sanctuary	Worship
		3:00 p.m.	Sanctuary	Choir Christmas Cantata
December	15	6:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Women’s Advent Study
December	16	6:00 p.m.	Gym	Wheatley Team
December	17	10:00 a.m.	Resource Room	Advent Bible Study
		11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
		12:15 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
		4:30 p.m.	Bell Room	Handbell Practice
		5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Choir Practice
December	19	4:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Christmas Caroling and Supper
December	21	9:15 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Fellowship Time
		9:30 a.m.		Adult & Youth Sunday School
		11:00 a.m.	Sanctuary	Worship w/March to the Manger
		5:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall & Gym	Room in the Inn
December	22	10:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Worship Committee
		6:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Women’s Advent Study
December	23	6:00 p.m.	Gym	Wheatley Team
December	24		No Practices - Church Office Closed – Christmas Holiday	
		4:00 p.m.	Sanctuary	Christmas Eve Service
December	25		Church Office Closed – Christmas Holiday	
December	28	9:15 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Fellowship Time
		9:30 a.m.		Adult & Youth Sunday School
		11:00 a.m.	Sanctuary	Worship – Christmas Sunday
December	30	6:00 p.m.	Gym	Wheatley Team
December	31	11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
		12:15 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
		4:30 p.m.	Bell Room	Handbell Practice
		5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Choir Practice