



Changing Lives by Sharing Christ, Making Disciples, Serving and Giving Hope

## Sermon Notes: Thursday, December 19 and Sunday, December 22, 2024

This week's song of the season is often overlooked. It comes from Simeon and is found in Luke 2:25-35. Simeon was a faithful man, who was waiting for the Messiah. God revealed to him that he would live to see the Messiah's appearance. Finally, Simeon did see him on the day of Jesus' presentation, and from this encounter Simeon burst forth with praise and prophecy. Simeon's story impresses me, because of the way in which he was guided by the Holy Spirit. Scripture tells us that he was led to the temple on the day of Jesus' presentation. Also, the Spirit led him to take the baby in his arms and make a prophetic announcement. Simeon makes me wonder about how the Spirit guides me.

Over the next few days, our lives will likely be filled. For some that is an active calendar, for others it will be trying to get it all done, and others will be filled with strong emotions of grief or being overwhelmed. In the fullness of life, take the time to stop and be guided by God's Spirit. Listen to where the Lord leads you. James 4:8 reminds us to draw near to God, and God will draw near to you. As we grow in our relationship with God, God will lead us. And in God's leading, I believe that we will know the Babe born in Bethlehem, just like Simeon.

Advent Blessings,  
Rev. Sherri

*Christmas Eve*

Worship

CHRISTMAS IN GADSDEN

4:00 PM  
OR  
6:00 PM

12.24.24

Live Nativity  
5th and Chestnut Streets  
5 pm presented by FUMC  
Gadsden Youth

FIRST UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH OF GADSDEN

WWW.FUMCGADSDEN.ORG

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### Worship Opportunities

**Thursdays: 5:30 pm**

**Sunday Mornings: Celebration 9 am\* Traditions 11 am\***

\*In-Person and Livestream or On Demand

[www.fumcgadsden.org/media](http://www.fumcgadsden.org/media)

### ACOLYTES

December 22: Volunteer

December 24: Volunteer

### Thursday Worship Security

**December 19** Mark Condra

**December 26** No Thursday Worship

### Tech Team Schedule

**December 22**

Celebration: Sheila Freeman, Bill Haller, Carmen McKiven

Traditions: Mark Condra, Wayne Payton, Rob Reynolds

**December 29**

One Service, 10 am — Bill Haller, Allie Haller, Brad Barnes

## The Chosen Season 2 Bible Study



Rev. Sherri will be leading a Bible Study of Season 2 of the Chosen starting January 8. Each week will focus on a particular episode, reviewing the corresponding scriptures while engaging both with thought provoking questions. The class will be offered at 11am and 6pm on Wednesdays in room 208. The class will last until April 9 (with the night session skipping March 26 for spring break.)

## Wednesday Fellowship

**Wednesday night meal will return January 8, 2025.**

**Wednesday Morning Bible Study @ 11 am, Gathering Room**

**w/ Rev. Sherri Reynolds**

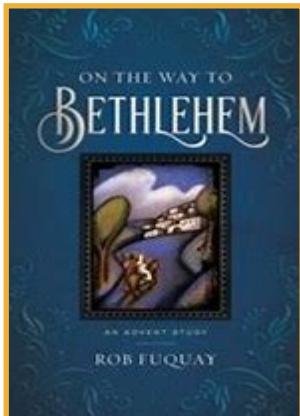
**Adult Small Groups @ Wonderful Wednesdays**

**Will resume on January 8, 2025.**

## Adult Studies on Sunday Mornings

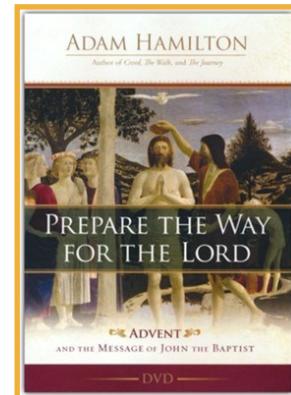
### “Prepare the Way for the Lord”

Living Waters/Martin Fellowship, Room 116



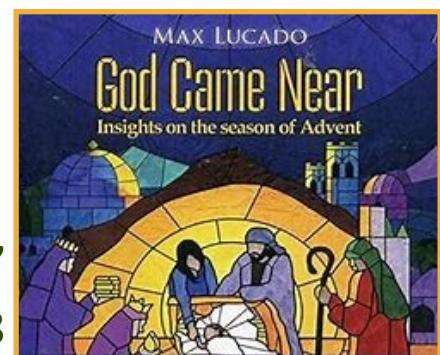
### “On the Way to Bethlehem”

Transitions, Room 209



### “God Came Near”

Pathfinders/Seekers, Room 208



## “Men at the Well” Thursday Mornings, 7:00 am

You are invited to join the weekly Bible study with the “Men at the Well” at the 278 Restaurant. Contact Todd Rains, Mark Condra, Mark Casey, or any of the Men at the Well for more information.

### ELC News

We held our last performance on Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at the Etowah County Courthouse. ELC Faculty and Students wish everyone a Merry Christmas!!

—Helene Haller



## STUDENT MINISTRY

### Upcoming Events for Youth

Christmas Eve Live Nativity, 5 pm December 24  
Ice Skating- December 29 (Chattanooga or Gadsden)

### Youth Wednesdays, 6 pm

Senior High, Rm 211/Middle, Rm 209

### Youth Sundays, 10 am

Youth Sundays w/ Becca  
Sunday mornings, Room 211  
Middle School and Senior High

### Wednesday Fellowship

Wednesday night meal will return January 8, 2025.

## Children's Ministry

Sunday Mornings @ 9 am and 11 am, Children's Church & 10 am Sunday School

**CHRISTMAS EVE ACOLYTES**

ALL ACOLYTES ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE IN BOTH SERVICES TO LIGHT THE CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLES.

4:00 & 6:00

**Rehearsal**  
Sun. 12/22  
3:00 pm

*Let's Celebrate!*

**Children's Christmas Musical**  
December 22nd @ 5pm, Sanctuary

Join us as we celebrate the birth of our Savior!  
Happy Birthday, Jesus party to follow in the gym upstairs!

**GFUMC KIDS DECEMBER CALENDAR**

**2024**

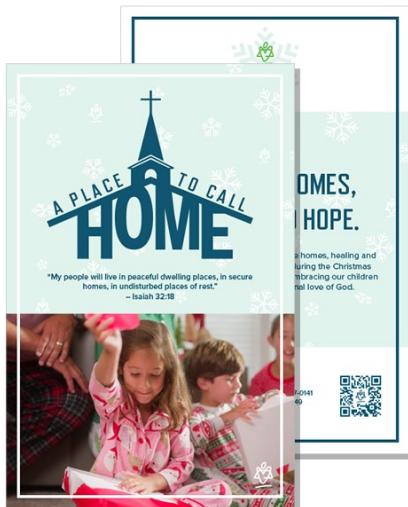
NOV 27	COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING 10-12
SANTA BRUNCH 10:00 AM	DEC 08
DEC 15	ACOLYTE PARTY 4-6 PM
KID'S CHRISTMAS PARTY DEC 18	
DEC 22	Christmas program 5:00 Happy Birthday, Jesus party

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [WWW.FUMCGADSDEN.ORG/CHILDREN](http://WWW.FUMCGADSDEN.ORG/CHILDREN)

## December Mission Focus

# The Angel Tree

Thank you to everyone who has given for the Angel Tree Gifts this year! Many lives were touched through your generosity.



**Embrace Kids** (formerly the United Methodist Children's Home) Since 1890, we've stood in the gap for the most vulnerable of children. More than 130 years later, our commitment has only strengthened. We provide homes, healing and hope to children coming from families in crisis, no longer able to live with families due to possible neglect, abuse or abandonment.

While children are our first priority, we also work with families to address harmful behavior, giving them a second chance at restoration and a glimpse of God's unconditional love. As a result, we're often able to help both children and families thrive despite the arduous challenges they face.

### United Women in Faith

The Christmas Boutique is open each Sunday morning during Advent, December 15 and December 22. We will be in the Chestnut Foyer between the 9:00 am and 11:00 am worship services. (see page 7)

Save the Date: Our next UWF Luncheon is Monday, January 13, 2025 at 12:00 noon.

—Delores Abney, President      —Olivia Kendrick, Vice-President



**GFUMC**



*"By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35*

### Ladle of Love

Fridays, 11:00am-12:00pm,  
at the Portico entrance.

*Donations may be made to the Ladle of Love Fund in honor or in memory of a loved one.*

**Clothes Closet Workdays**  
are Tuesdays before open  
days from 9:00-11:00 am.

**Open to Public**  
**1st & 3rd Wednesdays**  
**January open date is**  
**1/15**

**9:00 am to 11:00 am**  
**516 Broad Street Gadsden**  
Find out more about mission  
and service opportunities @  
[www.fumcgadsden.org/serve](http://www.fumcgadsden.org/serve)  
**Phone: 256-543-8200**  
**Email:**  
[fumc@fumcgadsden.org](mailto:fumc@fumcgadsden.org)

**#gfumcreconnect2024**

**Ladle of Love**  
**Clothes Closet**  
**October**

**LOL**      **379**

**Clothes Closet**      **315**

**November**

**LOL**      **404**

**Clothes Closet**      **310**

**Thanks to our  
Volunteers!**

## Stories of Generosity from Luke

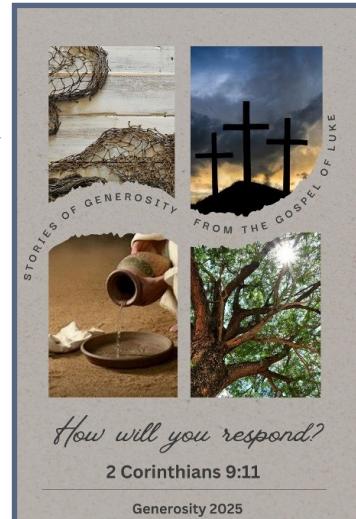
One of my continuing prayers over the past year has been for God's financial provision for First United Methodist Church. I am so thankful for that prayer being answered and people like you who helped answer it. **As of December 15, 68 commitments have been made for Generosity 2025, for a total of \$461,396 toward our general budget fund.**

We are continuing to receive cards, so it is not too late to participate in your commitment for the coming year. You may return your card through the offering plate, at the church office, or online ([www.fumcgadsden.org/give](http://www.fumcgadsden.org/give)). If you need more information or a printed card, contact the church office. Your estimate helps us plan for our 2025 budget. Please know that the estimate of giving cards are not legally binding and are kept confidentially within the church office.

Also, remember that our financial staff is here to assist you with end of year giving. If you need an update on your 2024 giving you can contact the church office. Someone will be in the office in the morning on December 27 and 30, if you have money to be turned in and credited for 2024. The office will be closed on the 31<sup>st</sup>, but if your contribution is postmarked on the 31<sup>st</sup> or given online/venmo on the 31<sup>st</sup> then you will receive credit for 2024. The financial staff can also direct you for assistance with stock gifts or IRA distributions.

In gratitude,

*Rev Sheri Reynolds*  
Rev. Sherri



**First UMC Gadsden**  
is a registered charity and can receive  
donations through Venmo:  
**@FirstUMCGadsden**  
(Please search in Venmo under charities  
or follow the link in the QR Code.)



Download our Church App  
Search First UMC-Gadsden  
In the App Store for Android or iPhone.



### Generosity: Ways to Give

In-person, at the offering time during worship.

Online: [www.fumcgadsden.org/give](http://www.fumcgadsden.org/give)

Text to Give: 256-344-8464

Venmo **@FirstUMCGadsden**

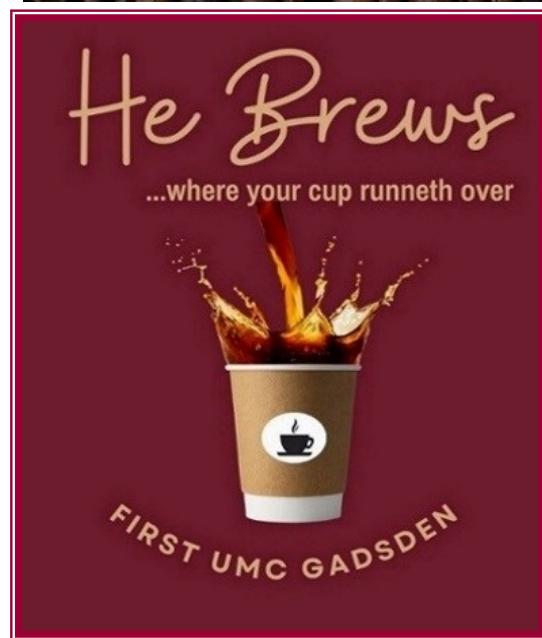
Mail your tithe or gift: 115 S. 5th Street, Gadsden, AL 35901



### Secure Online Giving

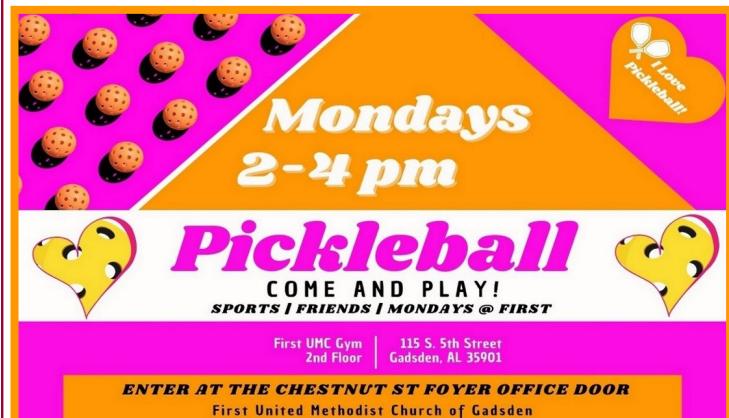


Scan the QR Code or  
Text to Give: 256-344-8464  
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden



Please join us for HeBrews Coffee Café between the regular Sunday morning worship services, from 10 am to 11 am.

*We can't wait to see you there!!!*

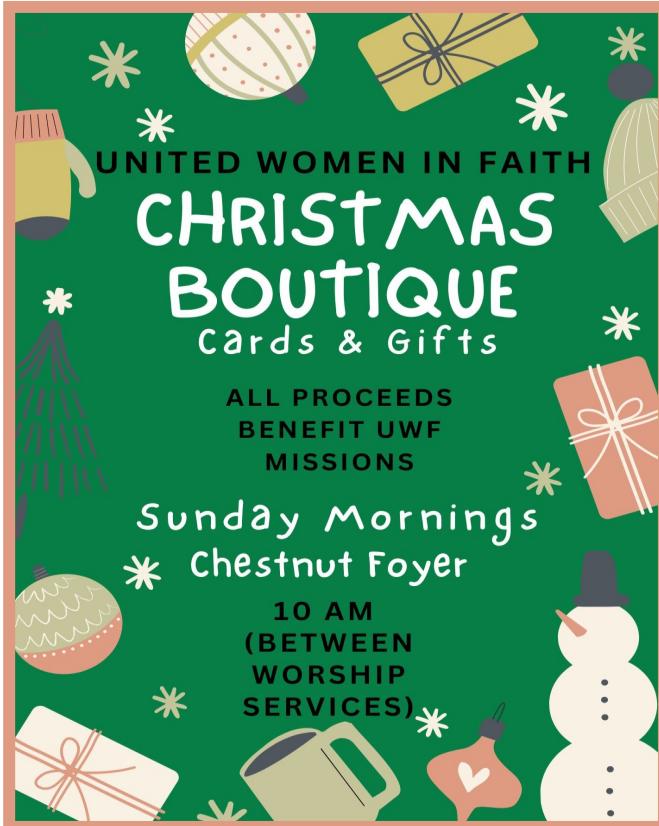


DO YOU KNOW WHO?



**MICHELLE MORGAN**

Michelle grew up in Manchester, NH, and earned her BA in Psychology from Westfield State University and her MSW (Master's degree in Social Work) from the University of Alabama. She worked as a medical social worker for hospice for 10 years before transitioning to online behavioral health in 2022. She is currently in the process of opening a private psychotherapy practice. Michelle also works part time completing adoption home studies. Her hobbies include sewing, reading, and camping. She has participated in United Women of Faith and attends the Transitions Sunday School class. She also fills in as an usher for early worship service as needed. Michelle has two children; Zachary (25), who is a Research Engineer at Auburn University and is engaged to Ana; and Gabrielle (21), who lives at home and works as a baker for Sinful Sweets.



## UWF Christmas Boutique for Missions

We want to add something new for you to the Christmas Boutique! We will have Christmas cookies and goodies to brighten up your Christmas. Come & support our United Women in Faith Missions for the next two Sundays.

### Take the Spiritual Gifts Inventory @ Spiritual Gifts UMC.org

Every child of God is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, specially gifted to play a unique and valued role in the body of Christ. No one is without gift or purpose.

Spiritual gifts are not our talents or skills. They are the grace of God at work within us, empowering us to match our deep passions with the world's deep need. The gifts are given to individuals, but they are given to build and strengthen community and to meet the needs of those around us.

Begin the journey. Discover your gifts. Talk about your gifts with others. Strive together to understand your gifts and how you can use them to serve God, neighbor, and world. You have been gifted. You have been given a purpose.



### #wearefirst

- Diverse
- Investing
- Empowered
- Rooted



Share your pictures of all things FIRST with #wearefirst on Social Media!



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

### More T-shirts are in Stock!

"We Are First" T-shirts are available in a variety of sizes in the Chestnut Foyer. The cost is \$15. Please make your check payable to FUMC Gadsden and turn it in to the church office. Thank you!

*Too Practical  
to Follow a Star*  
January 5, 2025

*Can You  
Still See It*  
January 12, 2025



*Sermons for the New Year*

*Rev. Sherri Reynolds*

## **Ring in the New Year in Worship @ First UMC Gadsden!**

**January 5- Epiphany Sunday**

Celebrating the visitation of the Wise Men  
"Too Practical to Follow a Star"

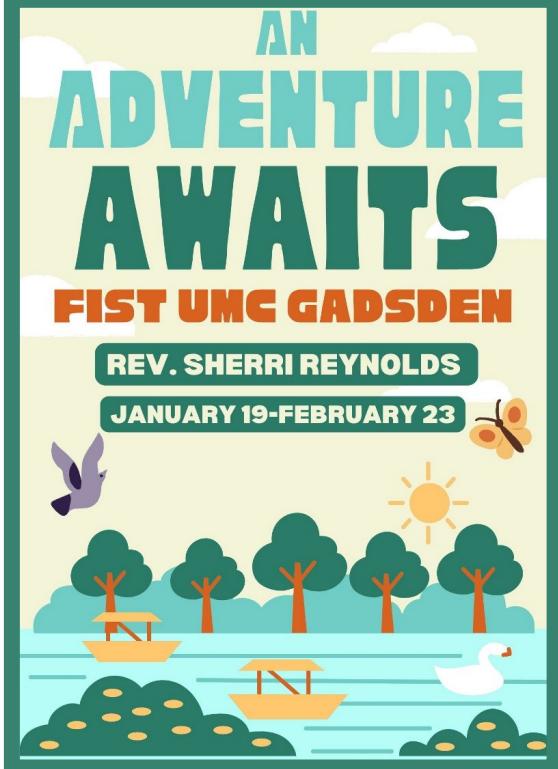
**January 6- Baptism of the Lord Sunday**

Remembering our Baptism  
"Can You Still See It?"

**January 19- February 23**

***Adventure Sermon Series***

Our journey of faith is a great adventure. With Moses as our guide, we will spend a season of looking at the great adventure of following Jesus and how that relates to us not only as individuals, but as First United Methodist Church



# *Songs of the Season*

Rev. Sherri Reynolds

**Thursday Worship**  
**5:30 pm**

*Thursday, December 19*  
*“A Long Awaited Song”*

*Thursday, December 26*  
*No Thursday Worship*

**Celebration**  
**9 am**

*Sunday, December 22*  
*“A Long Awaited Song”*

**Traditions**  
**11 am**

*Sunday, December 22*  
*“A Long Awaited Song”*

*Evening Worship, Sunday, December 22*

*Children’s Christmas Musical –Everyone Welcome*

*Tuesday, December 24*  
*Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship, 4 pm & 6 pm*  
*“The Angels’ Song”*

*Live Nativity presented by the GFUMC Youth, 5 pm*

*Sunday, December 29*  
*One United Worship Service, 10 am*



# *Songs of the Season*

A Sermon Series for Advent and Christmas

Nov. 24 - “A Mother’s Song”

Dec. 1 - Lessons of the Chrismons

Dec. 8 - “A Father’s Song”

Dec. 15 - Special Music in both Services

Dec. 22 - “A Long-Awaited Song”

Dec. 24 - “The Angels’ Song”

# First UMC Gadsden Calendar for Dec 22-28, 2024

## December 22, Sunday

9:00 am-Celebration Worship, Chapel  
**10:00 am-HeBrews Coffee, Chestnut Street Foyer**  
 10:00 am-Sunday School for all ages  
**UWF Christmas Boutique, Chestnut Street Lobby**  
 11:00 am-Traditions Worship, Sanctuary  
 3:00 pm-Children's practice for Musical  
**5 pm Children's Christmas Musical**  
**Followed by the Happy Birthday, Jesus Party**

## December 23, Monday

ELC closed until January 6, 2025  
 No Pickleball

## December 24, Tuesday

Office Closed All Day  
 4:00 pm-Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
 5:00 pm-Live Nativity, outside on corner of 5th &  
 Chestnut Street  
 6:00 pm-Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

## December 25, Wednesday

Office Closed All Day

## December 26, Thursday

Office Closed All Day

No Thursday Worship

## December 27, Friday

No Ladle of Love

**Year-End Giving Reminder:** Someone will be in the office in the morning on December 27 and 30, if you have money to be turned in and credited for 2024. The office will be closed on the 31st, but if your contribution is postmarked on the 31st or given online/venmo on the 31st then you will receive credit for 2024.

*The flowers on the altar today are in honor of  
 Laura Condra for her birthday, December 20,  
 from her children, grandchildren, and  
 great-grandchildren.*

### Immediate Prayer Concerns

Bill Leach      Mary Tom Hale



### Continued Prayer Concerns

Asher Mae Collins   Amy Epperson  
 Ada Blount (Bob & Trish Blount's granddaughter)  
 Shep Vincent (Jill Vincent's grandson)

### **Honorariums & Memorials**

#### General Budget

In memory of Glen Pierson, given by Judkins M. Bryan.  
 In memory of "Loved Ones" we miss, given by Mr. & Mrs. Michael  
 McKiven and family.

In memory of Glen Pierson, given by Olivia Kendrick & Bob Walden.  
 In honor of Evelyn Pierson, given by Olivia Kendrick & Bob Walden.

#### Benevolence Fund

In memory of Marj Ross & Ellen Cummans for their December  
 birthdays, given by Mr. & Mrs. Alan Ross.

#### Music Fund

In memory of Shep Midgley, given by Mr. & Mrs. Mandell Tillman.  
 In memory of Glen Pierson, given by Mr. & Mrs. Mandell Tillman.

### **Birthdays**

**Dec 22** Julia Lopez, Jane Gargus,  
 Caroline Long  
**Dec 23** Russell Hopper  
**Dec 24** Claire Wigley, Dr. Ross Isbell,  
 Mary Ragan Whisenant  
**Dec 25** Larry Hughes, Dawn Rains  
**Dec 26** Kaity Dorsett, Lori Sokol,  
 Victoria Mills, Morris Gladden  
**Dec 27** Jon Hand, Belinda Tackaberry,  
 Justin Gilbert  
**Dec 28** Will Edwards, Franklin Leach



### **Week of December 15, 2024**

In Person Total-\*216 Worship Total-773  
 Online-557 Thursday Worship-\*15  
 Celebration Service-\*31/0 \*in person  
 Traditions Service-\*170/557 UWF \*25  
 Bible Study \*23 Sunday School Adult-\*18/1  
 Children SS-\*3 Sr Hi & Middle SS-\*2  
 Wed/Sun-Children\*30 Wed/Sun-Nursery \*4  
 Wed/Sun-Sr.Hi \*5 & Middle Youth \*6

General Offering Budget	\$11,400.00
General Offering Received	\$16,169.82
YTD General Offering Budget	\$570,000.00
YTD General Offering Rec'd	\$644,233.82

### **Important Deadlines**

Deadline for newsletters  
Dec 22 & 30 is by noon  
Monday, December 16.

*All requests for spoken  
 announcements for Sunday  
 mornings must be turned in by  
Thursday @ noon, in writing to  
Susan Swann in the office.*

*All Meetings, Events and Activities  
 must be scheduled in advance with  
 the church secretary, by email  
 susan@fumcgadsden.org  
 or call the church office.*