

*Too Practical
to Follow a Star*
Rev. Sherri Reynolds



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

Sermon Notes: Thursday, January 2, and Sunday, January 5

“Too Practical to Follow a Star”

There are many advantages to being practical. According to The Benefits of Being Practical: Navigating Life with Pragmatism, a pragmatic life leads to efficient problem-solving, enhanced time management, effective allocation of resources, reduced stress and long-term success. There are many rewards for a realistic mindset. But there are times when God invites us to the impractical. God beckons us to take the path which may not be the most logical.

Take for example the Wise Men (Matthew 2:1-12). They witnessed a star at its rising, following it to a foreign land to worship a foreign king, The King of the Jews. There was nothing logical about their journey. Instead, they followed a star on a long and arduous journey. Their reward? They met Jesus and worshipped him, offering gifts in his honor. How might God be calling you on an adventure in 2025, much like that of the wise men? After all, it is time for a new year and a new adventure. You may find that the adventure may not be the most practical, but it may be an opportunity to meet Jesus again and honor him anew. Happy Epiphany, Rev. Sherri

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Worship Opportunities

Thursday: Worship, 5:30 pm

Sunday Morning:

Celebration, 9 am

Traditions, 11 am

**In-Person and Livestream or On Demand*

www.fumcgadsden.org/media



ACOLYTES

January 5: Volunteer

Thursday Worship Security

January 2: Steve Frederick

January 9: Mark Casey

Tech Team Schedule

January 5

Celebration: Sheila Freeman, Bill Haller, Carmen McKiven

Traditions: Sheila Freeman, Neil Mullin, Rob Reynolds

January 12

Celebration: Sheila Freeman, Bill Haller, Brad Barnes

Traditions: Mark Condra, Wayne Payton, Sheila Freeman

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, Room 208

January 8– Italian Trio

\$7 Youth & Adults \$3 Children 11 & Under

Dinner is served beginning at 5:15 PM

Wednesday Morning Bible Study @ 11 am, Gathering Room

“The Chosen” w/ Rev. Sherri Reynolds

Adult Small Groups @ Wonderful Wednesdays, 6 pm

Rev. Sherri, “The Chosen”, Room 208

Harriet Murray, “Destinations”, Room 110

Sunday School for All Ages

- ♥ Children's Sunday School -Room 104 & 108
4 years through 5th Grade
- ✦ Youth Sunday School -Room 211 w/ Becca
6th Grade through 12th Grade
- ♥ Transitions (New Adult) -Room 209
- ♥ Pathfinders/Seekers -Room 208
- ✦ Living Water/Martin Fellowship -Room 116
- ★ Nursery Available for Children 3 and under

“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

The ELC faculty and families will be back in action this week. On Monday January 6th, faculty will have a teacher work day to clean rooms and lesson plan. Students will return on Tuesday, January 7th. We are excited to see and hear about what Santa brought everyone.

Our Annual King Cake Fundraiser will take place in January. King Cake orders will be due by January 21, 2025. More information will be coming soon!

—Helene Haller



Youth Wednesdays, 6 pm

Senior High, Rm 211

Middle, Rm 209

Youth Sundays, 10 am

Youth Sundays w/ Becca
Sunday mornings, Room 211

Wonderful Wednesday Fellowship Dinner, 5:15 pm, Gathering Room

Wednesday, January 8– Italian Trio

\$7 Youth & Adults \$3 Children 11 & Under

Activities and Small Groups for All Ages begin at 6 pm.

Children's Ministry

GFUMC children
january & february

January Unit



I can do all things through
Christ who gives me strength.
Philippians 4:13

February Unit



In your hands are strength and
power to exalt and give
strength to all.
1 Chronicles 29:12

Sunday morning
Children's Church
9:00am & 11:00am

Sunday School
10:00am

Wonderful
wednesday's
6:00pm



January Mission Focus

UMCOR: ALLEVIATING SUFFERING ALL OVER THE WORLD

Originally founded in 1940 in response to displaced and vulnerable populations in the wake of World War II, the **United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)** is a ministry of The United Methodist Church through the General Board of Global Ministries. "Our goal is to assist the most vulnerable people affected by crisis or chronic need without regard to their race, religion or status. We believe all people have God-given worth and dignity."

As the humanitarian relief and development arm of The United Methodist Church, the **United Methodist Committee on Relief – UMCOR** – assists United Methodists and churches to become involved globally in direct ministry to persons in need. UMCOR comes alongside those who suffer from natural or human-caused disasters – famine, hurricane, war, flood, fire or other events—to alleviate suffering and serve as a source of help and hope for the vulnerable. UMCOR provides relief, response and long-term recovery grants when events overwhelm a community's ability to recover on their own. UMCOR provides technical support and training for partners to address emerging and ongoing issues related to disaster relief, recovery, and long-term health and development. Additionally, UMCOR supports migrants through legal and humanitarian support, as well as through global advocacy.

- **Pray:** UMCOR's work is undergirded by the power of prayer – both in the hours after a disaster strikes and through recovery.
- **Make supply kits:** Assemble relief supply kits to help keep UMCOR's Relief Supplies Network ready to deliver goods in the hands of survivors (U.S. only)
- **Volunteer:** U.S. volunteer efforts are arranged through annual conferences; reach out to your conference disaster relief coordinator to learn more.

The NAC Disaster Response Warehouse, located in Decatur, AL, is staffed by volunteers, and receives donations of disaster relief supplies based on UMCOR Standards.

During the month of January, the GFUMC Missions Team will be collecting items for UMCOR that will be donated through the NAC Disaster Response Warehouse. Watch for the list of needed items and the Red Buckets at our entrances.

United Women in Faith

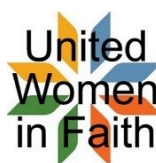
Thank you to everyone who shopped our Christmas Boutique this year! Our Mission Fund will be able to help those agencies who use money to help those in need.

Happy New Year!

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

Phone: 256-543-8200

Email:

fumc@fumcgadsden.org

#gfumcreconnect2024

Ladle of Love Clothes Closet

December

LOL	298
Clothes Closet	403

**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 \$461,596 toward our general budget fund.**

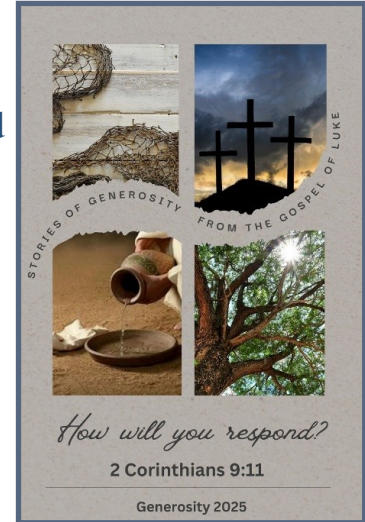
We are continuing to receive cards, so it is not too late to participate in your commitment for the coming year. You may return your card through the offering plate, at the church office, or online (www.fumcgadsden.org/give). If you need more information or a printed card, contact the church office. 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 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 financial staff can also direct you for assistance with stock gifts or IRA distributions.

In gratitude,

Rev. Sherri 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.)



venmo

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

Text to Give: 256-344-8464

Venmo **@FirstUMCGadsden**

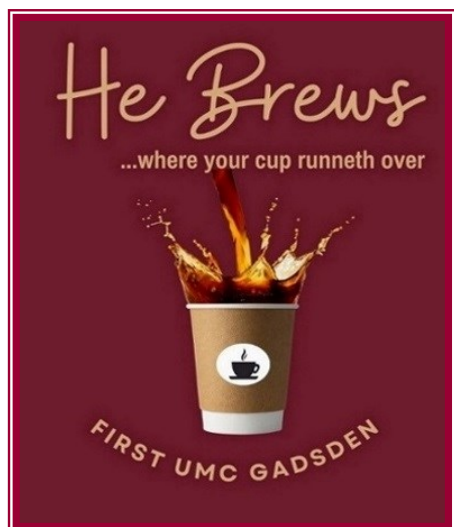
Mail your tithe or gift: 115 S. 5th Street, Gadsden, AL 35901



Secure Online Giving



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



HeBrews Coffee Café
10 am, Chestnut Street Foyer
Pickleball resumes on Monday, January 6.



**DO
YOU
KNOW?**

JENNIFER SMITH



The daughter of longtime members, Alan and Ginger Ross, Jennifer was born in Gadsden and graduated from Gadsden High School. She then attended Shelton State Community College, where she studied Early Childhood Education. She is the Showroom Manager at Plumbers Wholesale at 2100 Forrest Avenue and also works at our church nursery on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. Jennifer has helped with our Gift to Gadsden annual event by watching children in the nursery while their parents take the many courses that are offered. She is a member of the Peggy Casey Circle in United Women of Faith, and in her free time, her hobbies include baking and reading. Jennifer has one son, Taylor (22), who works in the Culinary area of the Marriott Hotel in Charlotte, NC.

*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 12- 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 of Gadsden.



First UMC Gadsden Calendar for Jan 5-Jan 11, 2025

January 5, Sunday

9:00 am-Celebration Worship, Sanctuary
10:00 am-Sunday School classes for all ages
10:00 am- HeBrews Coffee
11:00 am-Traditions Worship, Sanctuary

January 6, Monday

9:00 am-1:00 pm- ELC
9:00 am-10:00 am-Exercise Group, Gym
2:00 to 4:00 pm- Pickleball, Gym

January 7, Tuesday

9:00 am-1:00 pm- ELC
5:00 pm-Yoga, Gym
6:00 pm-8:00 pm-Basketball Practice, Gym



*The ELC Annual King Cake Fundraiser is here!
King Cake orders will be due by January 21, 2025.
More information will be coming soon! —Helene*



Honorariums & Memorials

General Budget

In memory of Glen Pierson, given by Mr. & Mrs. Richard McCoy.

January 8, Wednesday

9:00 am-1:00 pm, ELC
11:00 am-Bible Study-Pastor Sherri, Room 208
5:15 pm-Fellowship Dinner, Gathering Room
6:00 pm-Small Groups for Adults, Rooms 110 & 208
Children, Room 108
Middle Group, Room 209
Youth Group, Room 211
Choir Practice, Choir Room

January 9, Thursday

9:00 am-1:00 pm, ELC
9:00 am-10:00 am-Exercise Group, Gym
5:30 pm-Thursday Worship, Sanctuary
6:00 pm-8:00 pm-Basketball Practice, Gym

January 10, Friday

11:00 am-12:00 pm- Ladle of Love

Wonderful Wednesday Returns January 8!

Dinner 5:15 pm

Small Groups and Activities for All Ages!, 6 pm

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for the delicious lunch you had for my family. Everyone enjoyed it. And thank you for being my friends. I love every one of you.

—Merry Christmas and Love, Evelyn Pierson

Immediate Prayer Concerns

Mary Tom Hale Kathleen Ruhleder Bill Leach
Family of Elsie Garrick (grand niece of Seth & Gail Spotnitz)

Continued Prayer Concerns

Rinaldus (Rino) Scicluna
(Susan Swann's Son-in-law)
Asher Mae Collins
Amy Epperson



Birthdays

Jan 5 Christie Knowles, David McCoy
Jan 6 Nancy Whitt, George Harrison,
Harry Hager, Robert Hager, Tommy Hiltz
Jan 7 Jenny Skelton, Ross Hudak,
Junior Kamassa, Tyler Ridens
Jan 8 Aspen Jane Suttle
Jan 9 Anna Mullin, Bob Oltman,
Elizabeth Gilbert, Timothy Isbell
Jan 10 Heather Staton
Jan 11 Tallie Beckett, Alli Gardner



Week of December 29, 2024

In Person Total-*399 On Line Total-1,487
Worship Total-1886 No Thursday service
One Service-*115/343 No Sunday School
Christmas Eve 4 pm-*162/303 &
6 pm *115/791 Live Nativity *7
Children Tue/Sun *32 Nursery Tue/Sun *2
Middle & Senior Hi Tue/Sun *7

General Offering Budget	\$ 11,400.00
General Offering Received	\$ 11,077.00
YTD General Offering Budget	\$592,800.00
YTD General Offering Rec'd	\$677,757.00

Important Deadlines

Deadline for the newsletter is noon on Tuesday of each week.

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.