

THE GOOD NEWS

FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | JANUARY 2023



A PLACE TO BELONG...



Each Sunday, the liturgist reminds worship attendees that Faith seeks to be a place where people **belong** in community, **become** followers of Jesus Christ, and **believe** the good news of the gospel. Over the

next six months, as we explore God's word together in community, we are going to take a deep dive on what all of that really means and how it might shape our work together as the body of Christ.

In thinking about the first element of that, **belonging**, Janice Harmon, Director of Care, Connection and Inter-Gen (inter-generational) Nurture, wrote this:

Belong is a verb. It is not a static state. When we belong we are a part of' or 'connected to' others. Belonging at Faith UMC is a theology of inclusion.

In a spirit of collaboration (remember when we talked about "yes, and..."), I would expand that with this:

Yes, and...we belong to God and we belong to one another. And within those relationships, we belong to this particular body (Faith UMC) as members/vital parts. And this particular body (Faith UMC) belongs as part of the larger expression of the body of Christ in the world (the church universal).

At the heart of belonging at Faith are some key truths that we want to strive toward:

Each person is valued – just as they are as a beloved child of God. We all fall short of God's glory, as the letter to Romans reminds us, but that doesn't keep us from being valued as God's beloved creation.

Each person is known – not just by name, but with genuine curiosity and embrace. In the DC metro area, folks are often known by what they do or who they work for. At Faith, we want to know folks' dreams, longings, hopes and fears...as well as the name of their cat, their kids, or their favorite sports team.

Each person is connected. Simply being in a pew each week (or occasionally) does not connect our lives to other's lives. We connect when we break bread together, play together, learn together, and serve together.

Each person has a recognized purpose. God places a call on each one of us. We are created with

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A PLACE TO BELONG... (Continued)

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unique gifts that help us to distinctively and purposefully share God's love and light in the world. When we believe that about ourselves and one another, we begin to see our gifts and abilities with new possibility and power.

Between now and Lent (which begins with Ash Wednesday on February 22) we're going to explore this idea of belonging. During Lent we'll talk about what it means to **become** a follower of Jesus. And finally in Eastertide and right through Pentecost, we will talk about what it means to **believe** the Good News. At the heart of all of this shared journey is a commitment that to be a Christian is to submit ourselves to a lifetime of being transformed. We are never "finished," we are always moving on to perfection (as John

Wesley would remind us). Our work, as the body of Christ, is to be transformed and help others to be transformed by God's grace on an ongoing basis. This (and only this) is how we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

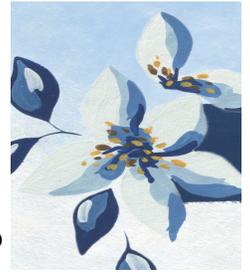
I leave you this month with two prompts for your reflection and prayer:

Do you feel you belong? Why or why not?

Where is transformation happening as you follow Jesus?

Beloved, be well and be light.

Pastor Laura



A CELEBRATION FOR JAN SPENCER



Jan Spencer has served in the role of Finance and Connections at Faith for over 14 years. Her last day on staff will be Tuesday, January 31.

The SPRC (Staff Parish/Pastor Relations Committee) extends an invitation to celebrate Jan at a reception following worship, Sunday, January 29th at 11:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall!

Also, on an upcoming Sunday, please take a moment to write a message for Jan in a message book that has been placed in the Narthex.

Bill Maas, Chair of SPRC, shared when her resignation was first announced, "We will make space to recognize Jan's many gifts and contributions', we give thanks for her hard work and dedication; alongside gratitude for Jan's commitment, we feel a deep sense of loss. Jan Spencer has been a vital part of our church administration while being a full member of our congregation."



FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

THANK YOU

Happy New Year! Thank you, Faith Church, for your generosity in adding a staff gift. I am appreciative of the countless kindnesses and continued collaboration on worship and music as I embark on year 15 here.

YOUNG SINGERS OF FAITH

I am thankful for the Young Singers of Faith, some of whom are new to singing, and some of whom are keeping the singing going after our covid19 respite. Our ensemble resumes rehearsals January 8 after 10 a.m. worship on Sundays, and we will create a schedule of contributing to 10 a.m. worship about every six to eight weeks. If you or someone you know has a child or children interested in singing, we would love for them to join us. Let me know at singingwu67@gmail.com.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE CHANGES

Bells of Faith and Chancel Choir have moved their rehearsals earlier on Thursdays.

- Bells of Faith now rehearses 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursdays in the Sanctuary.
- Chancel Choir now rehearses 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Thursdays in Fellowship Hall.

We always need more people to ring and sing, and all are welcome. If you are interested in joining us with bells on or singing from the steps, let me know at singingwu67@gmail.com.

EXPANDING REPERTOIRE / SAME REPERTOIRE

Chancel Choir and I continue to explore music from non-Western Art History traditions, or from within the tradition from BIPOC and women sources. Some of what we do we repeat over and over again, as they give our choristers pieces that are familiar and allow for the give and take of weather (particularly in the next three months), personal schedules, and unexpected issues. We will continue to add music by black composers throughout February, and music by women throughout March. More in the next newsletter.

With great appreciation,
Michael Wu

JUICE, JOE & JUSTICE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15 AT 11:15 A.M.

The new year brings more enlightening discussions about racial and social justice issues. Please join us in any month. These events are not a continuing series and every conversation stands alone. Come share your experience and learn alongside others on the journey. We meet after worship in room 206 (the Youth room) with refreshments provided. There will also be an opportunity for folks to join on-line, but we encourage as many of you as are able and comfortable to join us in person. We encourage everyone to review the following materials before the January session about **LGBTQ acceptance and allyship**, but if you don't have time, please still come. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Jennifer Young at young.jennifer@gmail.com.

MATERIALS:

<https://libguides.madisoncollege.edu/LGBTQ/gender>

<https://transequality.org/issues/resources/understanding-non-binary-people-how-to-be-respectful-and-supportive>

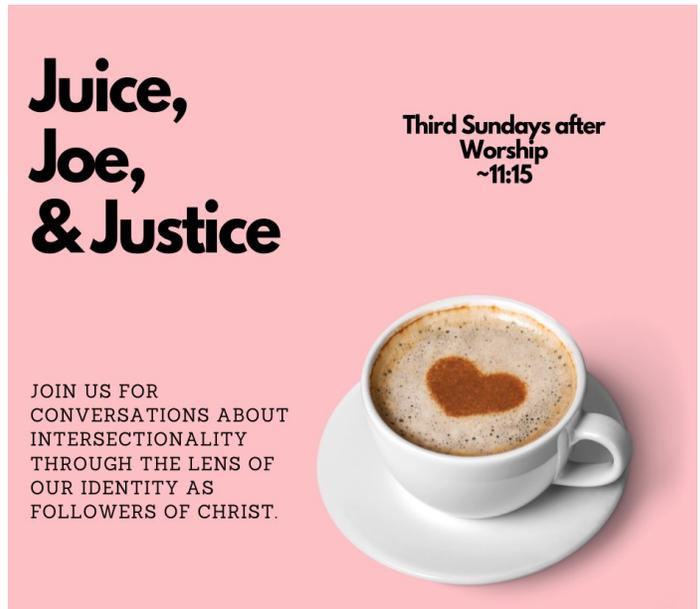
<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/voices/why-we-should-all-use-they-them-pronouns/>

An opposing viewpoint the above article: <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/voices/actually-we-should-not-all-use-they-them-pronouns/>

How to be an ally to trans people: <https://transstudent.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/BeAnAlly.jpg>.

[Trans Girls Belong on Girls' Sports Teams](#)

Transgender or devoutly Christian? An Iowa teen refuses to choose: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/12/23/trans-christian-iowa-sid-high/>



Greg Heath
1567 Scoonie Pointe Dr.
Chesapeake, VA 23322-7437

FAITH FOUNDATION GRANTEES, ROUND 2

Faith's Foundation is pleased to announce that we were able to give away a second round of funds for 2022. Checks in the amount of \$2,900 were sent to each of four local groups on November 2nd for the initiatives shown below. A member of Faith UMC sponsored each of these groups. We appreciate everyone's support.



Rockville Seniors, Inc - To assist low-income Rockville senior residents with small home repairs that will improve safety in their homes as they age in place.

Interfaith Works - To support the food pantry which offers a wide array of fresh produce, dry goods, and frozen meats, allowing folks to choose foods that best meet the need of their family.

Habitat for Humanity of Metro Maryland - To engage community volunteers to create a welcoming educational environment for underserved students by beautifying and enhancing the grounds of historic Longview Elementary of Gaithersburg. The hope is to welcome the students and families and help them build a more sustainable future.

Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative, Inc. - To provide funds for stipends for five neighboring low-income immigrant parents being trained by experienced Asbury residents to lead an early childhood literacy program.

MESSY CHURCH AT FAITH

Messy Church, is an opportunity to share light and love. It is a quarterly inter-generational worship service which emphasizes being together (fellowship), making things together (creativity & service), eating together, and celebrating God together through preaching, music, and prayer. Below is the schedule for 2023, we hope you will join us!



- Saturday, March 25 from 4:30-6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, June 17 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday, September 23 from 4:30-6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, December 9 from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer for any of the dates listed above, contact Janice Harmon at jharmon@faithworkshere.com.

BLESSING BOX, PART TWO!



Thanks to everyone who generously contributed "blessings," food, toiletries and paper products, for our Blessing Box. We received nearly 30 bags of blessings and are grateful for the outpouring. We also want to extend our thanks to Zoe, Phoebe and Ezra Peck-McClain for sorting and organizing the collection! Everything is being stored on shelves in Room 102, the classroom across from the office.

Now comes PART 2! Whenever you find yourself on church grounds, would you check and restock the Blessing Box? We will leave the classroom door unlocked so that you can access the inventory. Pick up an extra bag (in the classroom), shop from the shelves and place the items in the Blessing Box—that's it! You can even fold up the bag and leave it in the box for someone who is receiving a blessing to use.

Members of the congregation are in the building most every day of the week - for choir practice, to serve as volunteer security guard, to drop off a check, pick up a book, attend a class or meeting, fill altar candles, etc. Other members drive by the church on their way to other errands and could make a quick drive through the parking lot to check on the Blessing Box. Could we make this second part of the job the work of the congregation? Thanks for doing your part to be a blessing to our community!

GIFTS FOR 32 FAMILY MEMBERS!



While Christmas may feel like a distant memory already, the kindness and generosity of the congregation are not forgotten! The Angel Tree Project collected and wrapped numerous presents for the 32 family members in the 7 families that Faith United Methodist Church sponsored this year in the City of Rockville's holiday gift drive.

All of the presents were dropped off with the City's gift drive organizers in mid-December and they were extremely thankful (as am I!) for the patience and quick work of the congregation. It was a rocky start, but without fail, you came through to support folks in our community.

I appreciate everyone who participated in the project--all those who bought presents, donated toward supplies or gifts, helped to wrap gifts, and just generally supported the effort. It truly was a group effort and an honor to coordinate. Unfortunately, there are no pictures to show the efforts of all the helpers this year; I was so 'wrapped up' in the event that I forgot until it was too late! Thank you again to all involved for helping to make this Christmas special for several of our Rockville neighbors.

Celina Schmidt, Project Coordinator

OUR MISSIONARIES

Give Ye Them to Eat (GYYTE), excerpt from their December newsletter.

"We are grateful for so many things: the first would be you and your love for the Mexican people and for the GYTTE ministry. The next would be that Covid is way down, and by December we will have hosted three mission teams (AWARE teams) – two from Pennsylvania and one from Spokane, Washington. They provide concrete help, encouragement and also accompany our staff and some of the people with whom we work. This gives us hope!



This year we worked with members of ten communities teaching them to build dry ecological toilets, woodsaving stoves, gabions, different kinds of composting, recycled paper and dried fruit. "

Give Ye Them to Eat is one of the missionaries that Faith UMC supports through Global UMC. To read the entire newsletter, [click here](#).

THE STAFF THANK YOU!



The Faith Staff enthusiastically thank the members of the SPRC (Staff Pastor/Parish Relations Committee) and the the congregants of Faith UMC for their generous holiday monetary gifts to the staff. We appreciate the recognition and are grateful to be part of a loving community. Together, as Pastor Laura earlier shared, we strive to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Paul and Amanda Curto are happy to announce the birth of a healthy 8 pound baby boy, named Christopher Harold Martin, born December 13 at Sibley Hospital in DC. The proud parents are Vanessa Curto and Daniel Martin.

GRATITUDE

As we know it takes a village to raise a family and it takes many volunteers to share Faith's commitment to create a place to **belong**, to **become** and to **believe**, as "Together we seek to grow first as people who are changed by a relationship with God, finding faith in things we hope for and cannot see. Then we seek to become disciples of Jesus Christ who share light and love in the world."

The following are some folks that are sharing light and love. And furthermore, are striving towards the key truths to the heart of **belonging** as Pastor Laura noted in her article.



All those who graciously volunteered to read poems or share recipes with us during Advent and to help *know them beyond their name*.



Karen Johnston, Janice Jones and Sally Stolz baked homemade cookies to gift our Recovery Groups during their December meetings as an act of love in the world. We are grateful to them and Jan Spencer for *valuing each person*.



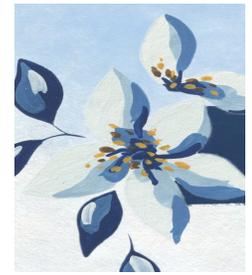
Marie Day and Ellen Stanley weekly edit the bulletin with liturgy and online bulletin, sometimes within a limited amount of time. We are grateful to them for *sharing their gifts*.



Gary Clark and Jay Moore regularly update our outdoor sign regardless of rain, sleet and snow. We are grateful for their commitment to *share God's love*.

2023 FAITH LEADERSHIP

As we first introduced in a special email sent over a week ago, we recognize Faith UMC incoming leaders and appreciate their commitment. The work of nominations in the local church is always ongoing as leaders emerge and needs shift and change. With the merger of finance and trustees, we are not yet at the point of reducing the size of our administrative teams, but with growth in the congregation, we are looking forward to more folks engaging in various outreach, discipleship and worship activities.



By our participation in church as the body of Christ, we commit ourselves to helping build and sustain that body – every part matters. There is work for everyone. If you are seeking a way to connect, please contact Pastor Laur so that we can have a conversation. In the coming year, we will be building a few workgroups to consider – stewardship, community kitchen use, building maintenance, Messy Church, new outreach initiatives, communications – all of these categories need your creative energy and prayer.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Pam Kessler, Chair
Bruce Werber, Assistant Treasurer
Gary Clark
Rachel Hedrick
Carol Henley
Brian Jones
Nancy Kneisly
Nancy Kuhn
Bill Maas
Sara Romeyn
Debbie Spriggs
Jane Rall, Lay Leader
Hunter Prillaman, Lay Member to AC

FAITH FOUNDATION

Barbara Wege, President
Gordon Henley
Jim Johnston
Bill Rooker
Bruce Werber

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Nancy Kuhn, Chair
Jim Johnston, Assistant Financial Secretary
Bruce Werber, Assistant Treasurer
Susan Costlow
Jay Moore
Jennifer Young
Bill Zaiser
Laura Norvell, Pastor
Jane Rall, Lay Leader
Hunter Prillaman, Lay Member to AC

LEADERSHIP/DEVELOPMENT NOMINATIONS

Laura Norvell, Chair
Gary Clark
Debbie Spriggs
Jane Rall, Lay Leader
Hunter Prillaman, Lay Member to AC

OUTREACH TEAM

Nancy Kneisly, Chair
Carol Henley
Kathy King
Bill Maas
(need additional members)

STAFF PASTOR/PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Bill Maas, Chair
Lesley Avery
Mary Gordon
Caroline Hopkins
Celina Schmidt
Jane Rall, Lay Leader
Hunter Prillaman, Lay Member to AC

OTHER KEY LEADERS

Gary Clark, Scouting Coordinator
Janice Jones, Coordinator for Children's Education
Debbie Spriggs, Communications Liason



BIRTHDAYS

Jan. 2	Andrew Bloom	Jan. 21	Hannah Coppersmith
Jan. 3	Joan Haller Glenn Simpson	Jan. 23	Carol Henley
Jan. 5	Gordon Henley	Jan. 24	Steve Clark Nancy Schaffner
Jan. 7	Joan Kelly	Jan. 25	Nicola Baptista
Jan. 8	Ruth Gadre	Jan. 26	Libby Spriggs Eric Winchenbach
Jan. 9	Suzy Rushbrook	Jan. 27	Tracy Clark Lizzie Powell Ada Wilson
Jan. 10	Yeri So	Jan. 29	Greg Heath
Jan. 11	David Cope	Jan. 30	Michael Wu
Jan. 15	Tammy Kneisly Anne Kuester Caren Stefan	Jan. 31	Mike Newton Celina Schmidt Jake Schmidt
Jan. 16	Jerry Jones Linda Peterson		
Jan. 18	Susan Jones		
Jan. 19	Gilbert Muir		

ANNIVERSARIES

Jan. 2	Hunter Prillaman & Eva Szabo
Jan. 3	Jim & Karen Johnston
Jan. 17	Laura & Matt Norvell



This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ~ 1 John 5:14

Did you know you can submit a prayer request 24/7 by emailing prayer@faithworkshere.com?