

Open Hearts

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2703 Augusta Street
Greenville, SC 29605



Ministry Newsletter

February 2024

OPEN HEARTS

OPEN MINDS

OPEN DOORS

Beloved Church,

At Open Hearts United Methodist Church, stewardship is discipleship. When you give to God your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness, you live into the call of being a disciple of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This Celebration of Stewardship quarterly report allows us to celebrate the fruits of our shared ministry and labor, and it is a doxology by giving God all the glory and praise for using us in the building of the Kingdom of Heaven here on Earth. Below are stories of transformation that we also celebrate from this quarter.

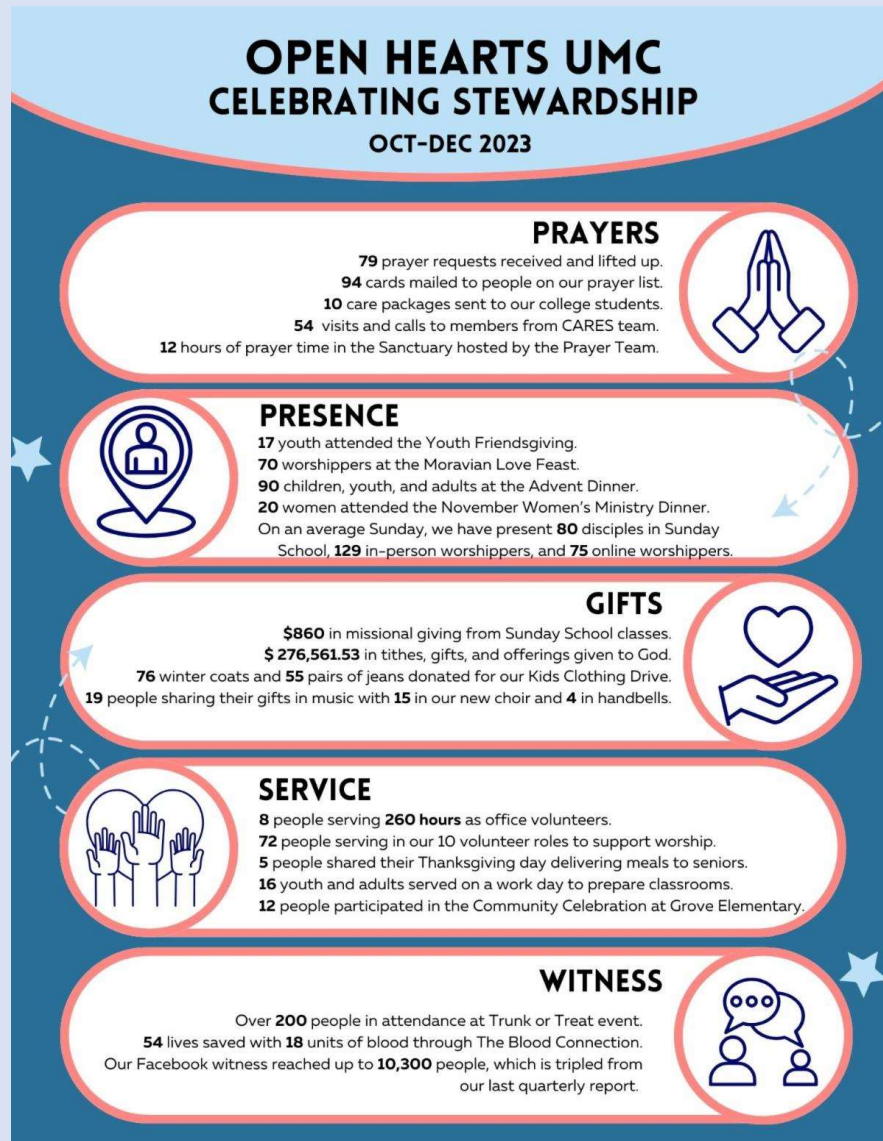
- *"...the Grove School event was very meaningful...The children were thrilled to get new coats. Most of them put them on right away, even with the tags hanging down...It was fun interacting with teachers, counselors, and folks from other churches, such as Our Lady of the Rosary. Many of the families spoke Spanish. It was one of the most culturally diverse gatherings I have been to in Greenville." –Dr. Lynne Shackelford, Leadership Team member*
- *We launched on July 1, 2023 with 131 members, and six months later, we have increased by 84% with a membership of 241 by December 31, 2023. Our membership now includes 33 children and youth, and 208 adults.*
- *In December, we were able to double our Sunday School ministry offerings by creating a children's class, youth class, and new adult class. The classrooms were prepared by youth and adult volunteers, and were furnished and stocked almost entirely from your donations, designated giving, and purchases from our Amazon wish list!*

2024 will mark our first full year as Open Hearts UMC! As we embark on the new year, I invite you to discern how you would like to continue to be

a disciple of Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to bring transformation into the hearts, lives, and community around us for God's glory.

Be on the lookout for an "Invitation to Stewardship 2024" form at church starting this Sunday, or you can use this electronic version found [here](#).

Your ministry partner,
Rev Karen Jones
Lead Pastor



Spotlight

We are delighted to welcome Elliott Smith as our new organist and pianist. Elliott originally grew up in Greenville and developed a keen interest in classical music from an early age. His interest ultimately led him to Furman University where he earned an undergraduate degree in piano. He then went on to the University of Cincinnati, where he earned a masters degree in both piano and conducting. He completed his doctoral work in



conducting at the University of Notre Dame before returning to Greenville, where he met and resides with his wife Jeanette and daughter Amara. Elliott has worked with several churches in the Greenville area as well as Hillcrest High School Concert Choral. Today Elliott is the Choir Director at the Governor's School. As an accomplished musician in many areas, Elliott's passion for piano and conducting has grown over the years to include organ as well, and we are excited for him to bring his many talents to Open Hearts UMC music program.

Updates from our Leadership Team



The Leadership Team is pleased to introduce the newest team member: **Katy Rebernak**. Katy replaces Rev Jim Patterson on the Leadership Team. Originally from Texas, Katy and her husband, Cody, now consider Greenville their home. As the proud parents of young daughters, Elisabeth and Hannah, they look forward to raising the girls at Open Hearts UMC. Katy has a background in business, specializing in blending analytical and creative thinking to solve problems. She has passion for helping the church reach people in our community who might not feel like church is for them.

She is a welcome addition to the Leadership Team.

Updates such as the above announcement are included in the notes from the Leadership Team meetings. These notes are posted on the bulletin board next to the church office, and can also be viewed in Realm. To find and read Leadership Team updates in Realm:

1. Open the Realm Connect App.
2. From the menu, choose Groups, Open Hearts United Methodist Church.
3. In the menu across the top, choose Files.
4. A pdf of the summaries is listed there to open and read.

REMINDER



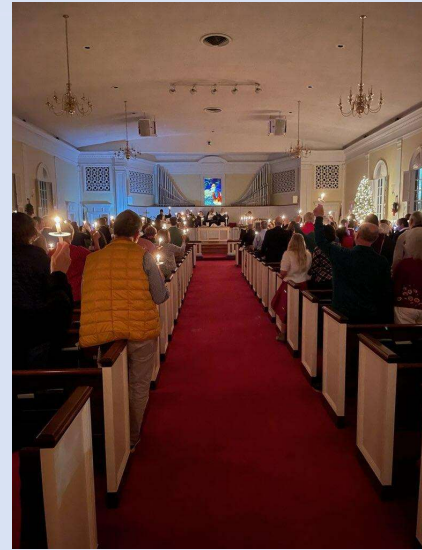
Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather, please watch WYFF News 4 (WFF4) for updates regarding services and events at Open Hearts UMC. You can also find updates on our facebook page and website or call

the church office at 864-233-8114.

LOOKING BACK

Our first Advent season together was a busy time full of activity, and a wonderful celebration of the birth of Christ. From our Advent supper to Advent Sunday and Christmas Eve Services, special mission opportunities and the Love Feast, we came together to enjoy fellowship, food, crafts, music and most importantly, the true meaning of the season. We hope all of you were able to participate in some way, and thank all the volunteers who made these events possible.



LOOKING AHEAD

[Lent is Approaching](#)

There will be a Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 13th.

Imposition of Ashes drop-in will occur on Wednesday, February 14th from 7:30 to 9:00am.

Ash Wednesday service will be held in the evening at 6:pm February 14th.





New Website

Open Hearts UMC will soon have a new website. Look for an email communication regarding the launch, its features and how to access our new website.

Mission Team February Learning and Outreach Opportunity

Julie Valentine Center Luncheon: To support child abuse and sexual assault survivors and their families, the Julie Valentine Center is sponsoring a luncheon featuring Brooke Shields on Wednesday, February 14 at 12 p.m. at the Greenville Convention Center. Several members of Open Hearts UMC have already purchased tickets (we have one reserved table so far). If you would like to join us as well, you can reserve tickets at <https://www.julievalentinecenter.org/>. In the registration process, please include a note indicating you would like to be seated at/near the Open Hearts UMC table. Virtual tickets are also available.

Our participation in the JVC luncheon will not only establish our church's compassion towards child abuse and sexual assault survivors and their families but will enable us to interact with representatives from other churches, other organizations and law enforcement. Those attending will learn about the needs of the Julie Valentine Center, their goals and how they might become further involved.



Blood Drive by Sarah Moseley

Three days after Christmas my life was saved by four strangers. While spending time visiting my family for the holiday season, I began experiencing some medical issues and had to be taken to Doctor's Care. I had no energy, had difficulty making the brief walk from the car inside, not to mention my complexion rivaled that of a ghost. The staff drew my blood and ran a quick test and less than two minutes later I was told, "You need blood immediately." My hemoglobin levels had dropped dangerously low, and I was in desperate need of a blood transfusion. Upon arriving at the

emergency room I was in and out of consciousness and could hear the nursing staff's concern over my pale appearance.

If you don't know, healthy and normal hemoglobin levels for women are between 12–16. I learned after being released from the hospital that hemoglobin levels below 6.5 are considered life-threatening. My level at

the emergency room was 6.1. Over the course of the next 24 hours I needed to receive four blood transfusions in order to stabilize my levels. Four different transfusions. Four strangers whom I will never get a chance to thank took a little time out of their days to stop by The Blood Connection and do what may have felt like was a very small step in their faith to help someone in need. Those strangers quite literally saved my life, and I am forever thankful to them.

While I can't thank my donors for their gift, I can share my story and encourage anyone who is able to stop by The Blood Connection and see if you are able to donate. Not everyone is able to do so, I understand, but everyone can help share the importance of the work The Blood Connection does. We never know the ripples that will have huge effects on lives when we take even the smallest step towards loving others. Love was shown to me through donations. I carry that love with me and am forever changed by it.

The Blood Connection will be at Open Hearts UMC on **Sunday, February 11th from 10 am–2 pm**. You can sign up online or just pop in before or after worship. If you are able to donate, please consider doing so. If you are not eligible for donation, please help spread the word and say a prayer for the ripples of love saving lives through this important work.

All donors will receive \$50 in TBC eGift rewards points. To pre-register:

[Register Here](#)



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