



Ministry Newsletter

December 2024

OPEN HEARTS

OPEN MINDS

OPEN DOORS



Beloved Community,

Advent is a season in the Christian calendar that is rich with symbolism, special liturgies, and traditions that help us prepare for the birth of Jesus. It's a time to reflect, find hope, and experience the light of Christ in our lives. Together, we'll explore the beauty of this season, embracing the warmth of community and the light that Jesus brings to our world. Our staff and committees have been hard at work preparing meaningful discipleship ministries for you and we warmly invite you to join us as we prepare for the coming of Christ together.

Your partner in ministry,
Rev. Karen Jones

MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT

ADVENT ACTIVITIES

Please pick up or [download](#) a copy of the 2024 Advent Devotional Booklet for full details on all Advent Ministries. Below are only highlights of what we are offering.



Special Worship Services

Sunday, Dec 15 – Lessons and Carols (11 AM Service)

Sunday, Dec 22 – Guest Preacher, Jana Clack (11 AM Service)

Tuesday, Dec 24 – Christmas Eve Services with Candlelight & Communion

- 11 AM Family-Friendly Service (nursery provided)
- 5 PM Evening Service (nursery provided)

Sunday, Dec 29 – Moravian Love Feast (11 AM Service)

Advent Bible Study

4-Week Advent Bible Study

7:00 PM on Tuesdays (Nov 26–Dec 17)

See details on Realm registration: [Register Here](#)

Children's Special Music

The Family-Friendly Christmas Eve service at 11AM will feature the children singing “Away in a Manger” in the worship service. Singing practice will be Sundays during Pray & Play and Sunday Bible School. Your children can also practice the song at home, familiarizing themselves with the song found [here](#).

Youth Christmas Party

The Youth Christmas Party will be on **Sunday, December 15th at 6 pm** at the Creech home (address in Realm). Students are invited to bring friends and a \$15 gift to exchange during the party.

Young Adult Christmas Party

The Young Adult Christmas Party will be held on Friday, December 13th at 6:00 PM at Jana Clack's family home in downtown Greenville. See full details [here](#).

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Join us in welcoming Brian Peck to the Open Hearts UMC family! We are glad to have him bring his

expertise to our church through his role as Director of Worship Technology.

Staff Spotlight



Brian

Brian is excited to join the Open Hearts UMC staff as Director of Worship Technology. Brian has decades of experience in churches overseeing live streaming and A/V technology. We are so glad to have his skill set and experience on our staff team!

MEMBER NEWS

Welcome

New Members!



Amanda, Lani & Jordyn Johnson



Beth Potts



Carlton & Will Grey

Amanda and Lani Johnson and their 7-year-old daughter Jordyn joined Open Hearts in November. Amanda and Jordyn were baptized the same day. Lani is employed by Cintas and referees kids and youth basketball. Amanda has grown daughters living out of state, and is currently a stay-at-home mom, volunteering at Jordyn's school and our church. Amanda continues to work on her psychology degree and furthering her education

in mental health. She also enjoys crafting, while Jordyn plays soccer and her enjoys learning phonics.

Beth Potts and her husband Rhys live in Greenville with their two-and-a-half-year old son Atlas. Beth enjoys spending her time adventuring around the city with Atlas and traveling.

William and Carlon Grey are newlyweds who are happy to join Open Hearts UMC. Both are members of the Greenville community, with Carlon working as the art teacher at Beck Academy and Will working in Finance. Together they enjoy good meals, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.

LOOKING AHEAD

MUSIC MINISTRY HAPPENINGS



We are heading into Advent with plenty of music to welcome the season. We are delighted to present Advent Lessons and Carols on December 15 featuring our choir, vocal quartet, and instrumentalists. Those interested in singing with us are welcome to join us Wednesdays at 7 to rehearse and Sunday mornings at 10:25.

Our two Christmas Eve services will offer different musical delights--at 11am our children and youth will be featured musicians throughout the service and at 5pm our choir will lead worship with a moving candlelight capstone.

The Moravian Love Feast at the December 29 service will provide an opportunity to sing familiar Christmas carols while we share fellowship and celebrate Christmastide together. We look forward to seeing you during this holy season!

MISSIONS OPPORTUNITIES

Celebrating Advent through Missions

S.H.A.R.E. will be offering special giving opportunities at Advent and Lent. Our Advent opportunity will direct support to the wonderful ministries of the United Methodist Church while streamlining our congregational requests throughout the year. (See the Advent booklet for fuller information.) Our Lenten giving opportunity will support one or several community organizations decided upon annually by our S.H.A.R.E. committee. During the upcoming sacred time of Advent, when we celebrate God's gift to us of the Christ child, SHARE is offering some opportunities for our congregation to share our time, talents, and financial resources.

- To remember the global struggle to end HIV/AIDS, to honor those we have lost, and to support those living with AIDS, Open Hearts will be collecting food pantry items for AID Upstate on Sunday, December 1, World AIDS Day. See <https://www.aidupstate.org/> Under "Get Involved, Food Pantry," for a comprehensive list of needed items. Place items on the rolling carts in front of the church office.
- To support those participating in programs to foster self-sufficiency, Open Hearts is encouraging members to get engaged in the various holiday opportunities that United Ministries is sponsoring. Use this link for more details. [Click Here](#)

Expanding S.H.A.R.E. Outreach

We will also be establishing a benevolence fund. In November, the chaplain of the Julie Valentine Center, an Open Hearts ministry partner, contacted our church and other supporting faith communities to let us know that a girl had to leave her home and move in with relatives to escape abuse. Her relatives did not have adequate sleeping accommodations for her. JVC sought funds for a bed. S.H.A.R.E. quickly consulted with Pastor Karen and unanimously decided to contribute funds. Partnering with Beth Israel Synagogue, another strong JVC supporter, we enabled JVC to secure a bed and bedding within days of receiving the request.

This heartbreaking situation made us realize Open Hearts needs to establish a benevolence fund to enable S.H.A.R.E. to respond to serious matters that from time to time come to our attention, especially from our ministry partners. Under the leadership of Jana Clack, we will be formulating a policy and hoping to develop this fund in 2025.

MEN'S MINISTRY



Men's Ministry Update

SAVE THE DATE

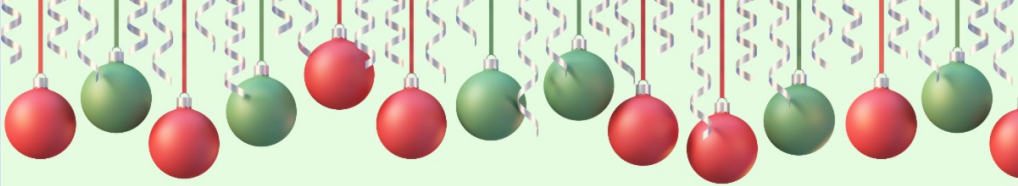
The next Men's Ministry event will be on Tuesday, January 14, 2025. Details will be communicated later.

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

The Youth Christmas Party will be on Sunday, December 15th at 6 pm at the Creech home (address in Realm). Students are invited to bring friends and a \$15 gift to exchange during the party.



The Young Adult Christmas Party will be held on Friday, December 13th at 6:00 PM at Jana Clack's family home in downtown Greenville. See full details [here](#).



Young Adult Christmas Party

December 13th

6:00 pm | Downtown Greenville

You're invited to bring friends and an ornament to exchange during the party! Childcare will be provided on site.

SAMARITAN HOUSE

After much research, discussion and deliberation, the status of the Samaritan house will be changing in the future. For more information regarding the Samaritan House [click here](#).

LOOKING BACK

MUSIC PERFORMANCE

On November 3 the adult choirs from Open Hearts UMC, Fourth Presbyterian Church, and St. Michael Lutheran Church combined their forces with a small professional orchestra to perform Fauré's *Requiem* for a full house. This free concert featured our Director of Music Ministry, Dr. Tish Oney, as the soprano soloist, and our dear friend, Vance Jenkins (Director of Music at Buncombe Street Methodist), as baritone soloist. Open Hearts contributed twenty singers to this choir of sixty! For a video recording of the performance, [click here](#).

ALL SAINTS DAY: NOVEMBER 3, 2024



All Saints Sunday Worship

BLOOD DRIVE

As we wrap up the year, we GIVE THANKS for our partnership with The Blood Connection! During our quarterly blood drives in 2024, we collected sixty-four units of blood saving almost two hundred lives locally. The Blood Connection thanks our donors and our church through the TBC Rewards program by providing eGift cards for each donation. Open Hearts was able to purchase several items for Sunday School classes from our Amazon “wish list”.

As we look forward to 2025, please mark your calendar for our first two blood drives of the year: **February 9th and May 4th.**

FAMILY ADVENT NIGHT

Our annual Family Advent Night was a meaningful evening of preparation for the season ahead! We shared in a churchwide meal, and Advent wreaths and sock snowmen! Thank you to everyone who helped plan, prepare the food, and decorate the tables, and who shared their gifts with the congregation.

We look ahead to Advent with full hearts and with our eyes fixed on the manger— O come, O come, Emmanuel!



Family Advent Night 2024



MISSION NEWS

November has certainly been a busy mission month. Our Open Hearts congregation has responded with great generosity.

This Thanksgiving, having existed just a little over a year, S.H.A.R.E. is grateful to the generous and compassionate response of our congregation to follow Christ in showing our love for our neighbors.



Members bought 43 warm winter coats for children at Alexander



In addition, Open Hearts provided 400 cans/boxes of side items to accompany



On November 19th a team of eight church members journeyed to Triune Mercy Center to extend our "Let Us Break Bread Together" program. They delivered a wonderful

Elementary School that social workers had identified as having significant need through the Buy One Share One organization.

the Thanksgiving turkeys Alexander School families received on November 25th.

meal, as well as a card of gratitude, to the Triune Mercy Center staff. Even better, once the staff was served, the team joined in the meal and fellowship. We appreciate the bonds we are forming with Triune and will look forward to providing a meal for their homeless participants in late December.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Busy Women's Brunch

The "Busy Women's Brunch" on November 9th was filled with laughter, delicious food, and good company! Stay tuned for information regarding our next Women's Ministry Event!



Remember to check our Amazon wish list to support our church needs as we grow! There are new items added all of the time!



Website : openheartsumcsc.org



Open Hearts United Methodist Church | 2703 Augusta Street | Greenville, SC 29605 US

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