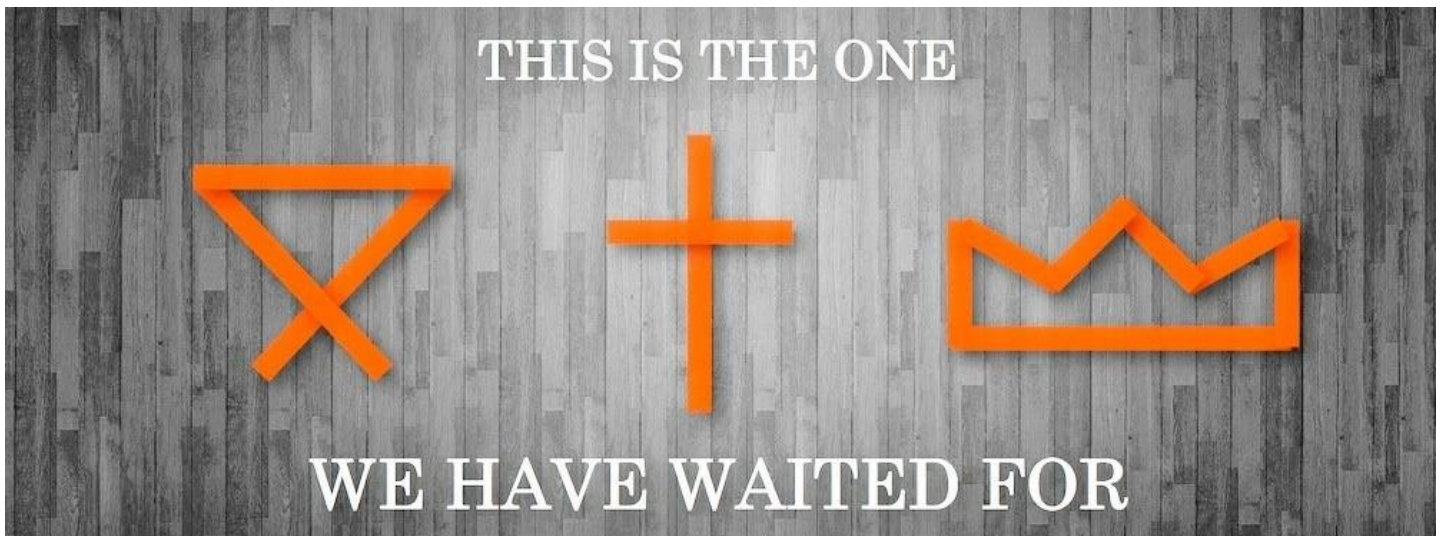


**Welcome to  
Mt. Pisgah United Methodist Church**

**December 24, 2017**



**8:00 pm & 11:00 pm**

## We Gather Together

Welcome

Prelude 8:00 p.m.

*Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

Brahms

11:00 p.m.

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Hayes

### \* Call to Worship

Leader: All through this season of Advent, we have been encouraged to wait, to seek, to wonder, and to rejoice.

**People: Today we will hear the story of God's wonderful love.**

Leader: Today we will be challenged to believe in all that God can do.

**People: Open our hearts, Lord, that we may be ready to receive you. Amen.**

### \* Lighting the Christ Candle

### \* Hymn No. 240

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

Solo 11:00 p.m.

*He Shall Feed His Flock/Come Unto Him*

Handel

### \* Affirmation of Faith

*The Nicene Creed*

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## Proclamation and Response

Anthem

*One Small Child*

Larson

### \* The Gospel

*Luke 2:1-7*

### \* Hymn No. 220

*Angels from the Realms of Glory*

The Message

*Is There Room?*

Bob Cooper

Invitation to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Lord Jesus, this most holy of nights brings me gladness, grief, and joy.

Gladness, because you left the splendor of heaven's glory to come to a dark and cold world; to bring the light and warmth of your kingdom to a world so in need of your love, your peace, and your joy.

Grief, because you came into the world, yet the world did not receive you. You came to your own, and your own did not welcome you and still today, people turn away from you. I turn away from you. Sin still scars your creation and the hearts of your own people.

Joy, because you offer perfect forgiveness and full cleansing to all who acknowledge their need of you. Cleanse my heart tonight, Lord Jesus, so that I may welcome you as I long to, certain that I am also welcomed by you.

**Amen.**

### \* The Peace

Offering

Offertory 8:00 p.m.

*Christmas Sanctus*

Dengler

11:00 p.m.

*Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne*

Hayes

Prayer of Thanksgiving

## Thanksgiving and Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving No. 2257 B, C, D

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them up to the Lord**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

The Lord's Prayer

Giving the Bread and Cup

Music during Holy Communion 11:00 p.m.

*Christmas Sanctus*

Dengler

Prayer Following Holy Communion

**Almighty and redeeming God, today you have made us one with you by lovingly sending your Son to take on our frail flesh. We thank you for this Word made flesh, revealed to us in the manger and in the bread and wine. Grant that we may find in his birth the new birth which he brings in us, to live out your gospel of love in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### Sending Forth

\* Hymn No. 239

*Silent Night, Holy Night*

\* Dismissal with Blessing

Postlude 8:00 p.m.

*In Dulci Jubilo*

German Carol

11:00 p.m.

*I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*

At the conclusion of our Christmas Eve services, we light our candles one from the other, signifying that one candle does not lose any of its light by lighting another. Rather, the light is doubled, and the darkness lessened proportionately. In the same manner, the more people who are brought into the light of Christ's love, the brighter, better place the world will become, as we advance the Lord's plan in preparation for his second coming.

Hearing Assistance Devices and Large Print Hymnals are available. Please ask an Usher.

### Music Leadership

Mary Ellen Balazs, organist; Beth McNeill, pianist; The Chancel Choir; Kay Adams, organist; Kirby Gundlach, soloist

### Make Room at the Inn

A reading of the birth of Jesus in Luke's narrative reveals something amazing-- no inn, innkeeper, stable or animal presence at the birth is mentioned. Luke says, "While they were there (Bethlehem), the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them" (Luke 2:6-7 NIV). Tradition has obscured the actual account of the birth, embellishing a story that is complete, although brief. Legend, Christmas carols, Christmas pageants and crèches that have embedded non-scriptural content into our heads, and unfamiliarity with Middle Eastern culture are to blame. What we encounter each Advent--even in our churches--is probably not the message Luke intended us to receive. Bethlehem was a tiny town, usually populated by a few hundred people, and unlikely to have had an actual inn--its population only temporarily swelled by the Roman census requiring descendants of the line of David to register there. The Greek word Luke uses, misinterpreted to mean "inn", is "kataluma", also used to describe the room in which Jesus shared the Last Supper with his disciples--the guest room of a house where out of town guests could spend the night--a living area. In Christ's day, hospitality to visitors among the Jews was essential, so it would have been socially inexcusable to turn visitors away. Joseph likely had relatives living there, but their guest rooms would probably have already been crowded with visitors. So, rather than being turned away, they likely just had to stay in the lower level of a house--an area just a few feet lower than the raised main living area, and a place that often housed animals, containing a manger to feed animals when they were inside. Filled with straw, this was a suitable crib for a newborn. These revelations in no way diminish the Christmas story, but rather enhance its meaning by providing a glimpse into the culture into which Jesus was born and lived. We still have a problem with "a lack of room for Jesus" in our crowded lives. We have innumerable concerns and such overcrowded schedules that we risk not having room in our personal "inns"--our hearts--to receive Jesus at Christmas. It's essential that we offer hospitality and welcome to Jesus and also to make space for others, welcoming them with the present of Christ's presence.

Marty Hines

### Christmas Eve Offering

We all witnessed the devastation caused by hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Many are still recovering. Tonight, 100% of our offering will go to support those who are still recovering from the effects of the hurricanes. If you would like to help, please make your gift to "Mt. Pisgah UMC" and put "storms" in the memo section. Please place your offering in the offering envelope provided in the pew racks. If you'd like to text your donation, please text to 804-294-3493. In the message portion of the text message, include the amount, space one time, then type "christeve". Vanco (the company we work with for the give+text) will then text you back to enter your credit card number. Offerings intended for Mt. Pisgah's regular ministry or mortgage & maintenance funds should be marked clearly as to their purpose. Thank you so much for your generosity.

# Getting Involved at Mt. Pisgah UMC in the New Year

**January Sermon Series: *The Burdens We Carry*** - What troubles you? Do you struggle with illness or family disunity? Are you grieving, hurting or unable to forgive? Join us beginning Sunday, January 7 for Rev. Bob Cooper's sermon series, *The Burdens We Carry*, as we explore how to find healing, wholeness and hope. Traditional worship is at 8:15 am and 11 am in the Sanctuary. Contemporary worship is at 10:45 am in the Christian Family Life Center.

**Winter Bible Study: *The Book of Isaiah*** - The Book of Isaiah is often called "the fifth gospel" because it has more to teach us about Israel's coming Messiah than any other source. Beginning Wednesday, January 3, Old Testament scholar Dr. Sandra Richter will guide us via video lessons through this amazing study and proclamation of Jesus Christ, which Isaiah issued nearly 700 years before Christ's birth. Dr. Richter combines history, archeology, geography, and ancient Near East languages to bring the Old Testament, and this ancient prophetic voice, to life. Our Bible study classes meet weekly on Wednesdays at 11 am or 6:30 pm.

**Fellowship for Young Mothers** - MOPS, a group for mothers of preschoolers, meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 10 am to noon. MOPS provides young mothers with a chance to come together in friendship and to hear presentations about early childhood development. Childcare is provided. For more information, contact Kristen Lee at [mops@mtpisgahva.org](mailto:mops@mtpisgahva.org).

**Preschool Program and Enrollment** - Mt. Pisgah Preschool offers a balanced approach to learning through play and teacher-guided activities in a warm and loving Christian environment. Our program includes developmentally appropriate curriculum enhanced by weekly chapel, music experiences, and small class sizes with a low teacher-to-student ratio. Open enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year begins on January 22. Our program serves children ages 2 years and 6 months through 5 years old (Pre-K). For details or to schedule a tour, please call Preschool Director Colleen Callihan at 794-1720.

**Children's Ministry** - We seek to create a safe and welcoming environment where all children can be nurtured spiritually. Opportunities for Bible study, mission, and fellowship through Sunday School, kidzJaM - a kids missions program, Vacation Bible Schools, and special programs for children and families, are planned throughout the year. For more information about our children's ministries, contact Kay Adams at [children@mtpisgahva.org](mailto:children@mtpisgahva.org).

**Be Here. Belong. Become.** - Mt. Pisgah's Youth Ministry offers many opportunities to fellowship together, grow your relationship with God and others, and serve in our community (global and local). Each Sunday, we meet for Middle and High School Small Groups from 9:30 to 10:30 am, and we make connections between our faith and current events. On Sunday afternoons from 4-5 pm, we meet for Youth Group, where we play games and learn more about being disciples. On Wednesday evenings, from 6:45 to 7:30 pm, we gather for ECHO, where we learn more about the stories of our faith and how they can speak to us today. Coming up in July 2018, we will take our youth on a mission trip to Pittsburgh to serve some of the city's elderly homeowners as we repair their homes. You are welcome to join us, and if you would like more information about our youth ministries, please contact Rev. Amy Crisp at [youth@mtpisgahva.org](mailto:youth@mtpisgahva.org).

**Music & Worship Arts** - Mt. Pisgah has a variety of Vocal, Handbell and Instrumental Ensembles: Cherub Choir (age 4 by Oct 1-grade 1); Carol Choir (grades 2-5); Youth Choir (grades 6-12); Chancel Choir (adult choir provides vocal leadership at our traditional services); Carol Bells (grades 2-5); Youth Bells (grades 6-12); Chancel Bells (older teens and adults); Youth Band (grades 6-12); ARISE Band (vocal and instrumental leadership at our contemporary service). If you would like more information about the music and worship arts ministries, please contact Zeb Roberts, Dir. of Traditional Music and Worship Arts at [musicarts@mtpisgahva.org](mailto:musicarts@mtpisgahva.org); Eric Reynolds, Dir. of Contemporary Music at [cmusic@mtpisgahva.org](mailto:cmusic@mtpisgahva.org); Jack Ryan, Dir. of Music for Children and Youth at [childyouthmusic@mtpisgahva.org](mailto:childyouthmusic@mtpisgahva.org).

**United Methodist Women** - The United Methodist Women is a community of women dedicated to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ by expanding concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the United Methodist Church. Mt. Pisgah's United Methodist Women has three circles open to all women of the congregation. The Martha Circle meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 1 pm. The Rebekah Circle meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 pm. The Watlington-Bowen Circle meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 12 pm. For more information, contact UMW President Kay Smith at 897-1369.

**Sunday, December 31**, we will have one worship service at 10 am in the Sanctuary.



## Mt. Pisgah United Methodist Church

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Rev. Dr. Robert E. Cooper, *Lead Pastor*

Zeb Roberts, *Director of Traditional Music and Worship Arts*