



*saginaw umc*

Faith Opportunity Christ Unity Service

# Focus Newsletter

Vol. 11, Issue 12 December 2022

**Christmas Choral Musical**  
December 18th - 8:30am and 11:00am

**Children's Christmas Pageant**  
December 18th - 4:30pm

**Christmas Eve Services**  
Children's Service - 11:00am  
Candlelight Service - 6:00pm

*Holiday Services*

## Upcoming Events

<b>Finance Committee Meeting</b>	<b>Tuesday, December 13</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>
<b>Christmas Choral Musical</b>	<b>Sunday, December 18</b>	<b>8:30 am &amp; 11:00 am</b>
<b>Children's Christmas Celebration</b>	<b>Sunday, December 18</b>	<b>4:30 pm</b>
<b>Christmas Eve Services</b>	<b>Saturday, December 24</b>	<b>11:00 am &amp; 6:00 pm</b>
<b>No In-person services (online only)</b>	<b>Sunday, December 25</b>	<b>Facebook &amp; YouTube</b>
<b>Office Closed</b>	<b>Monday, December 26</b>	
<b>Office Open 9:00 am - 12:00 pm</b>	<b>Tuesday, December 27 - 29</b>	
<b>Office Closed</b>	<b>Monday, January 2</b>	
<b>One Service Only</b>	<b>Sunday, January 1</b>	<b>10:00am</b>
<b>Sisterhood Community Link Collection</b>	<b>Saturday, January 7</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>
<b>Endowment Committee Meeting</b>	<b>Monday, January 16</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>

## Greetings from your SPRC

As the Christmas season settles in, we often reflect on all that we are grateful for. I know as a church we are grateful for our dedicated staff, who over the course of an at-times challenging year, have put in the extra time and effort to support the missions of our church. The work they do everyday is meant to enrich the lives of our members and those in need, We would like to show our appreciation to our church staff with a Christmas Staff Love Offering.

If you would like to contribute to a Christmas Love Offering for our staff, you can participate using any of the ways you already give to the church, including cash, check, and online giving. Just be sure to notate your gift with **Christmas Staff Love Offering**. If you give online, look for **Staff Love Christmas Offering** under **Staff Appreciation**.

We appreciate your support of Saginaw UMC. If you ever need to discuss with your SPRC, you can contact me and I, or another committee member, will reach out to you.

Sandy Thompson

Staff Parish Relations Committee Chairperson



## Welcome New Members!

Please help us welcome our new members who joined in 2022. We are thankful that you made Saginaw United Methodist Church your home!

-Caitlin and Danielle Armstrong

-Rita Boger

-Caroline Dreese

-Karen Hathaway

-Christian Matson

-Steve Moskowitz

-Brady and Lacy Newcomb

-Peggy Rutherford

-David and Natasha Sutton

-Micki and Tony Teague

-Derry Tutt

-Eric, Kylie, Palmer, and Thatcher Webb



# End of Year Giving Opportunities

For SUMC members who must withdraw annually through a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from their IRAs, the Finance Committee wants to remind you that you can have RMDs sent directly from your IRA account to SUMC. Sending RMD contributions directly to the church prevents them from becoming part of your taxable income, thus saving you money on your 2022 taxes.

This is a financially attractive way to support the church and save you income taxes on your RMD. Note: RMD contributions must be made by December 31, 2022, so please consider this opportunity by the end of the year.



**Little Blessings** is so blessed for our long-standing program, with faithful families and a wonderful staff. LB opened some 30 years ago as a small ministry of Saginaw United Methodist Church (SUMC) and I am so excited to announce one more partnership between SUMC and Little Blessings: The LB Scholarship Fund. This fund has been created to bless families that may not be able to otherwise afford to attend the Little Blessings Program. Monetary gifts to this fund will be used toward student tuition and will help alleviate the financial strain Little Blessings would incur discounting tuition rates. Families in need can apply for assistance, and scholarships will be approved on a case-by-case basis dependent on funds available. If you are looking for a donation option for the end of this year, please consider donating to this brand-new scholarship fund, or you can make a general donation to be used at Little Blessings. All donations are tax deductible, and donation receipts will be available in the new year.

## *From Pastor Ramon Smith—Saginaw UMC: A Caring Church*



Every Sunday, I greet the congregation by saying, “There is no other place I would rather be than right here, right now, with all of you.” I mean these words from the bottom of my heart. I am excited about what God is doing in the present, and I look forward to the future. Therefore, I have asked to remain as your pastor for 2023. In addition, the staff-parish relations committee has requested that I remain your pastor. The

Bishop and the cabinet will meet January through April to make pastoral appointments to local churches.

The Central Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church has identified Saginaw United Methodist Church with great potential in the conference. As a result, the Central Texas Conference will supply an organizational leadership coach to Saginaw United Church and 14 other churches in our conference. The coach will address all three phases of our organizational structure: pastor, staff, and committees. The coaching aims to help us align our structure to accomplish the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (our 5-mile radius). In addition, the conference covers 100% of the cost of the training. At a time when it was necessary to cut our budget from the previous year, this will enable us to do more with less. Lastly, there will be greater clarity about our mission and improved communication throughout the church.

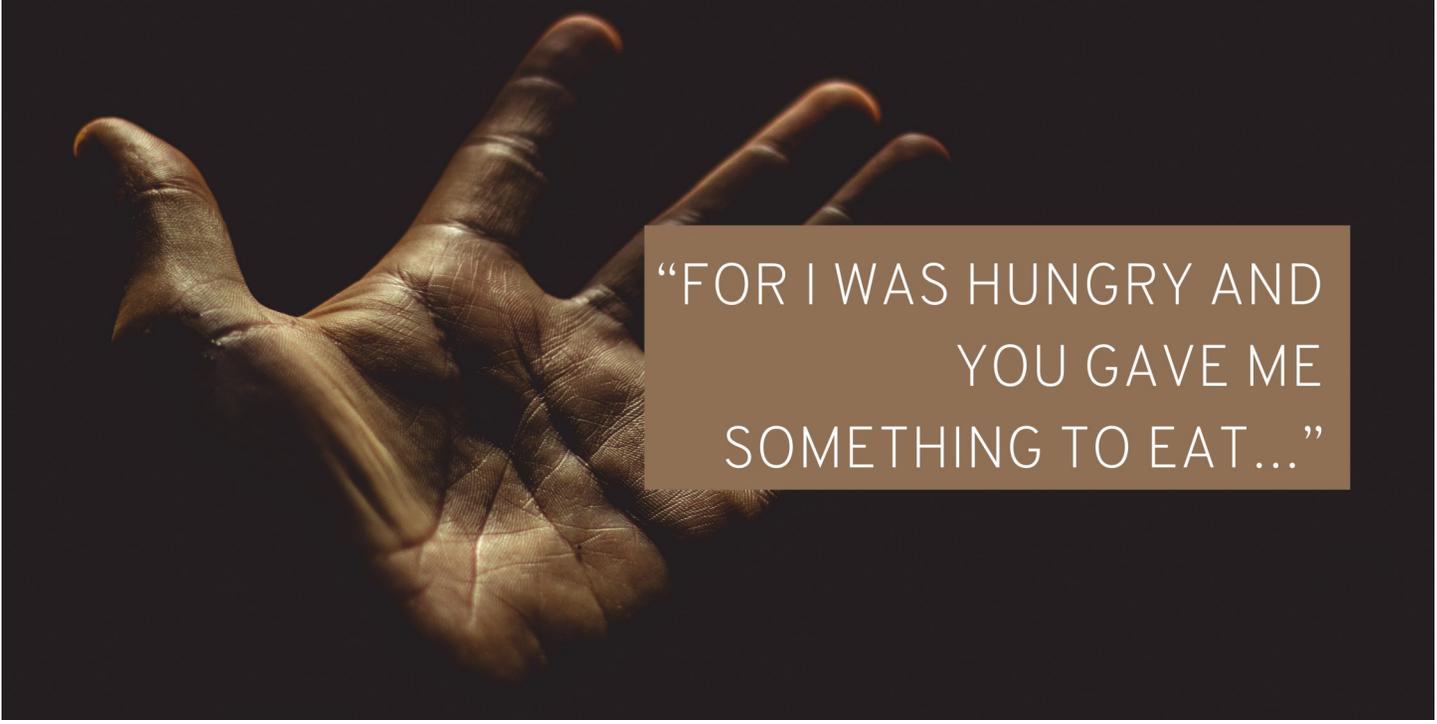
Blessings and Peace, Ramon F. Smith, Pastor

## Community Link Christmas Boxes

Thank you to all who contributed to the Community Link Christmas food boxes that were filled last Sunday. You are making a difference in the lives of 50 families who will be the recipients of your generosity.

The Sunday After and Samaritans Sunday school classes, Methodist Men, your communion rail contributions, and individual donations provided funds to purchase food items. Thanks to the Young Couple's Sunday School class for working as the hands and feet of Christ while packing the food boxes during their class time last Sunday. They made quick work of filling the boxes and stacking them in the Fellowship Hall for delivery to Community Link.

Whether you donated or filled boxes or prayed for the people who will receive the assistance at Christmas, please know that you are appreciated.



“FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND  
YOU GAVE ME  
SOMETHING TO EAT...”



## What's happening in Youth?

### Hygiene Kit Update

Thanks to the generous donations made by our congregation and youth groups from Smithfield, Alliance, and Saginaw United Methodist Church, we have completed 55 hygiene kits to be donated to the Presbyterian Night Shelter! In addition, we have several donations of socks and underwear, which were items listed as a "greatest need." The youth also received a donation of over 25 handmade quilts that were wrapped in a ribbon and a note of encouragement. These will be given to the Presbyterian Women's Night Shelter. Thank you church family, for all of your support and generosity!



### Advent in Narnia

Youth has begun a new study series in Sunday School this Advent season titled "Advent in Narnia." This study series will take a look at the themes of light and darkness, temptation and sin, and forgiveness and hope in the second book of "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe."

Whether you have or have not read the book or watched the movie version, be sure to make plans to join us for this study! It is sure to be an adventure as well as an opportunity to see the holiday season from a new perspective. Youth Sunday school is held each Sunday at 9:45 am in the youth room. For more information, please contact Michelle Burkholder, Director of Youth Ministries, at [michelle@saginawumc.org](mailto:michelle@saginawumc.org).

### The Gift is in the Giving

SUMC Youth once again have the privilege of blessing others who are in need during this holiday season. We have adopted a family with 4 children ranging from ages 4 to 9. We will be providing them with stocking stuffers for Christmas. This month, the youth will head out to the stores, lists in hand to spread some Christmas cheer! This event has truly become one of our very favorite things to do each year. It is a wonderful reminder of the impact a simple gesture of kindness and generosity can have in the lives of others. The real blessing is watching the excitement and joy in the youth as they do their shopping. What a great lesson on the gift of giving!



I am so thankful for another year here at Little Blessings. This will be my second full school year, and I am so thankful our school is OPEN, with an (almost) full program! Our children are all happy and excited to come to school, and our teachers seem to be the same. I am so blessed to be part of such a wonderful ministry and thank the Lord for the support we receive from SUMC, so we can continue to keep this important ministry alive.



Our LB children are hard at work preparing for our upcoming Christmas concert! We will have silly songs about snowmen, and Santa, and reindeer, as well as some special songs about our wonderful baby Jesus. Ask any of our students whose birthday we are celebrating, and you SHOULD hear a resounding “JESUS’!” The program is such a special time to bring our kids together with their friends and teachers, so their families can see a little bit what life is like while they are with us at LB. It’s also very ‘special’ time to see who will *actually* sing... or leave Ms.

Kristin singing and doing all the motions by herself! Either way, I love the Christmas program, AND the holiday time at Little Blessings! It is wonderful to work in an environment where the TRUE meaning of Christmas can be taught open and honestly to the smallest of hearts.

From the Little Blessings Family, we wish all the SUMC families a very merry Christmas!!!!





The wonderful children of SUMC have been working hard on their Christmas Musical and hope you can join us for “The Christmas Story A -Z”. The performance will be on Sunday, December 18, at 4:30pm in the Sanctuary. There will be a celebration following the performance in the fellowship hall with refreshments, photos, crafts, and games.

In the month of November, the children completed a study in Sunday School of some of the names of God. We learned that God is My Lord, God is My Shepherd, God is My Healer, God is My Father, and God is My Defender. Thank you to our devoted teaching helpers Jenny Cardenas, Shelley Collins, Dee Griffith, Kathy Wheeler, and Chrissy Martinez. The SUMC children are thankful for each of you!

The Children’s Department would love to have you join us in leading the next generation of SUMC to love God, study His word and follow Jesus in today’s world. We have a need for volunteers that would be willing to serve during Sunday School as teacher or helper, in the nursery, or during Wee Worship. Your time of service is what would be best for you to serve and could be every week or once a month on a rotation. The children love to see smiling faces that are excited to welcome them to Sunday School where they will spend time together learning and having fun. We would also like to build a “bank” of volunteers that would be willing to be on a call list if any of our regular teachers or nursery workers are not available to serve.

Contact Sandra Young at [children@saginawumc.org](mailto:children@saginawumc.org) for more information on joining the Children’s Department by volunteering.



## End of Year Reflections

Within a small church setting, it's common for staff and employees to wear multiple hats. After almost one year of working in Saginaw UMC, this has been my experience as well. The variability of my position has prompted questions such as: "What is your job title, and" "What do we call you?" Or, simply, "What do you do?" Furthermore, my position is only part-time, so I'm not in the office every day to answer these questions. To help bring us all on the same page, and to reflect on the previous year, I thought it would be helpful to take a moment to explain what it is that I do.



The primary role for which I was hired is to serve as the digital media administrator. Within this role, I am tasked with updating the website, posting to social media, producing video devotions, creating the worship slides each week, updating the church's calendar, and creating digital announcements for our church events in accordance with the "announcement requests" I receive through the website (located under the "events" tab). In addition to these tasks, I helped our church migrate to additional streaming platforms, such as YouTube and Twitch, to make online worship services as available as possible. My role has also moved beyond the digital and into the analog where I have created several postcard campaigns and coordinated the creation of numerous church signs.

Because I have formal theological training from a Methodist divinity school, the position of digital media administrator was expanded during the interview process to include "worship assistant" as well. Within this aspect of my job, I help plan worship services each week, write the call to worship and some of the prayers, lead aspects of the liturgy on Sunday, provide occasional research for sermons, and also help with pre-worship setup. In addition to helping with our normal Sunday services, I have also created special services, such as our vigil for Ukraine and the Blessing of the Animals service.

Since accepting my current position back in January, my job has evolved to include new ministry opportunities in addition to my other roles. In late January through the Spring, Pastor Ramon and I co-taught a Bible study on 1 Corinthians and then the Gospel of Mark. I joined both the discernment committee and the task force assigned to "refreshing" the sanctuary. On Youth Sundays, I have provided vocals and guitar for their praise songs. Additionally, I have had the pleasure of accompanying Pastor Ramon on several trips to take communion to those who are homebound or in the hospital. I created a prayer group that meets before our Sunday services to pray for the congregation. And finally, I've had the opportunity to preach when Ramon is out of town or on special occasions.

Because of the variety within my position, it has been difficult to come down on a firm job title. Currently, my understanding is that I am called the "digital media and worship assistant." My self-understanding of my job is simply as a minister. I am not on the ordination track, so I am not officially a reverend or a pastor. However, I consider my role in this church to be someone who helps keep our ministries functioning to best meet the needs of our congregation. But if all of that is still confusing, simply calling me "Nathaniel" is always acceptable.

Grace and Peace, Nathaniel Metz



### Community Link

The Sisterhood will continue to support Community Link's effort to end hunger in our community in 2023. We always appreciate your commitment and generosity to others. They are always in need of shelf stable items such as peanut butter, crackers, jelly, canned vegetables and fruit, rice, beans, instant potatoes, pasta, ramen noodles, spaghetti sauce, flour, and sugar. Household items and hygiene products are always appreciated as well; such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner, laundry detergent and fabric softeners, and toilet paper. Our next few collection dates are January 7, February 4, and March 4.

### Ladies Day Out

Our next scheduled Ladies Day Out is scheduled for Saturday, January 14 from 10:30 am until 12 pm. In honor of the Fort Worth Stock Show & Ro-deo, we will be line dancing! We will have plenty of chairs to rest in and refreshments. If you are not interest-ed in trying out a few "boot scooting" moves, please join us regardless for fellowship. There will be plenty of fun and laughter, and who doesn't need that?



Following their monthly breakfast meeting on Saturday, Dec 10, the Methodist Men installed 3 cabinets ordered by Little Blessings and reconfigured one of their doors. Big thanks to Dale Pontius, Ken Sipll, Bob Pressler, David Ranney, Dave Weaver, Gary Hill, Don King, Jerry Avery, Lenny Moore and Orlando Martinez for all their help.



# Connection Opportunities

## Samaritans

*People of Faith who respond to the needs of our church and community.*

Join our Sunday School class  
Sundays: 9:45 am to 10:45 am  
Room: C1/C3

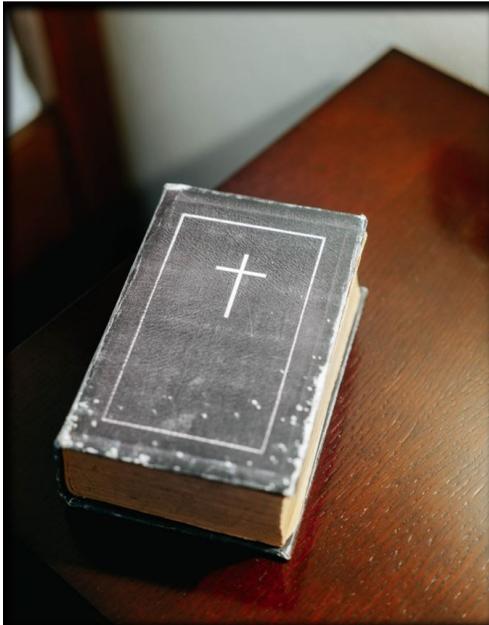
**Current Study:**  
**Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ**  
**by Timothy Keller**  
Contact: Belia Thompson  
be.escobar.thompson@gmail.com

## Sunday After

Adult Sunday School Class

*Meets @ 9:45 in Room C-5*

An invitation is extended to anyone wanting to engage in an open discussion, a deeper perspective, and a better understanding of the previous Sunday's sermon



**Men's Bible Study: A Self-Directed Discussion**  
**Tuesdays at 7pm (Room C-1/C-3 or via Zoom)**  
**For more information, please contact the church office.**  
**Studying:**  
**"Unoffendable: How Just One Change Can Make All of Life Better"**



## *Women of Grace*

Sundays at 9:45am room C2

You are invited to join them and bring a friend. We are studying

***Because of Bethlehem* by Max Lucado**

If you have any questions, please contact  
Janet Page, 210 846-5306 or  
Susie Rhoades, 765 748-0272.



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#### Focus Newsletter Schedule

The Focus Newsletter a monthly publication of Saginaw United Methodist Church. The next publication will be on January 10 with submissions due to [office@saginawumc.org](mailto:office@saginawumc.org) by January 3. Visit [saginawumc.org/contact-us/email-sign-up/](http://saginawumc.org/contact-us/email-sign-up/) to sign up to receive the newsletter by email and to receive special e-news blasts.



[Facebook.com/saginawumc](https://www.facebook.com/saginawumc)

Sunday Morning Worship in person and online 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.  
Office Hours Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

