A voice of one calling:

"In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God."

I have been thinking a lot about Advent the last couple of weeks. There are so many exciting things about this season both in the church and in the “secular” world. I feel like I could almost burst with delight at times. It really is one of my favorite times of the year because I have so many fond memories of this time from my childhood and youth years.

I can remember some of the trips to see Santa and I will admit I love the holiday Christmas cartoons (the Peanuts special is my all-time favorite!). But what I remember the most is the pure joy and enthusiasm I felt being a part of my church community during this month of waiting. And that is what we do, how we live- somehow we find joy in waiting. Like many of those who grew up in Maryville First, and I would imagine other communities, I remember craft nights and cantatas. I remember caroling with my youth group and having crazy Christmas parties. I remember learning about and making Chrismons for the sanctuary tree. There are so many things we get to do as the Church to prepare and celebrate!

Yesterday Brian and I spent much of our afternoon cleaning as a way of preparing to put up our decorations. It was exciting for me because this will be our first Christmas to decorate our house. But that experience got me thinking about all the stuff in my life and my heart that I need to clean out in order to prepare for the coming of Christ (the already and the not yet coming).

The everyday-ness of life can really take its toll on us. It is not only the “big” moments in life that make it harder to function and find room to make joy. We fill our lives with work, sports, family, activities, entertainment, hobbies, social events, worry, anxiety, etc…etc. You can see there are good things in this list; things that God also intended for us to have in order to enjoy life. But we must also ensure that we clean out some personal devotion time all year round to prepare ourselves for Jesus and all that He offers the world and us.

Let this season of Advent be a time of intentional practice for you as we prepare for Christ in this faith community. Allow yourself time to clean out more space for Christ. Cleaning is difficult work; especially if you have neglected a room for a while. But doesn’t it feel better when you see the finished product and you can use that area for something meaningful?

This is my hope for all of us this Advent season!

In Christ,

Asa
Sound of the season
Who doesn’t love a little Christmas music this time of year? On December 3rd The Orchestra at Maryville College and the Community Chorus come together to present an evening of classics from Bach, Vivaldi and Handel as well as more traditional and well known Christmas music.

Ticket Information:
$10 for adults
$8 for seniors who are 60 and older
$5 for students
Reservations and payment need to be made by November 28th.

An evening of food and Christmas cheer
Come join us as we head over to the Partridge & Pear Restaurant in Pigeon Forge, Tuesday, December 11th. This eatery from the folks at the Incredible Christmas Place serves up rustic, regional cuisine in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. With friends from your church family, this meal will truly be a memorable experience. After supper we will admire the lights of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge together.

Other dates to remember:
Friday, November 30th
Christmas at Dollywood

Tuesday, December 18th
Knoxville Jazz Concert

Thursday nights are Craft Nights at the church
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Young Adult News
Kitchen capers
A few days before Thanksgiving the kitchen in Asbury Hall was bustling with activity as the church’s new Young Adult group came together for a baking night.

The goal of the evening was preparing more than 30 pumpkin and pecan pies. All of these delicious treats were served during the Welcome Table on the evening of Thanksgiving.

A Dickens of a time
What would the Christmas season be like without a little “Bah Humbug?” Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol” returns this year to the Clarence Brown Theater at U.T. The Young Adults are planning an afternoon outing on December 16th right after church to enjoy this beloved holiday classic. The show begins at 2:00 p.m.

Booked for Christmas
Why not take some time and relax under the glow of that Christmas Tree with a good book? The Young Adult Women’s Book Club returns on December 19th at 7:00 p.m. The women will be reading “The Christmas Box” by Richard Paul Evans. Contact Asa for more information.

Got answers?
Also on December 19th, it’s time to test your knowledge. The Young Adult men will meet at Smoky Mountain Brewery for “Trivia” night. This fun outing starts at 7:00 p.m.

Adult Ministry News
Contact Ginny West Case for more information.

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6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
A “celebration” of Christmas carols is an appropriate description of this year’s cantata by the combined Morning Glory Chorus and Men’s Chorus.

This collection features seven of the best loved carols of all time. Included are “Joy to the World”, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”, “Away in a Manger”, “O Holy Night”, “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”, “O Come All Ye Faithful” and “Silent Night”.

The Biblically based narration tells the story of the birth of Jesus in simple terms, focusing on the wonder of that first Christmas night.

Sunday, December 2
8:15 am
Morning Glory Worship

Best loved carols of Christmas
presented by the
Chancel Choir
with Orchestra, Pipe Organ, Bagpipe
and Joy Singers Children’s Choir

Mr. Terry D. Wilson  Mr. Dwain Pesterfield
Conductor Organist

Saturday, December 15 - 6:00 pm
Concert to be taped by WVLT-TV

Sunday, December 16
10:30 am and 7:00 pm
**Sunday, Worship Services**

8:15 a.m. - Morning Glory  
  in Asbury Hall

10:30 a.m. - Traditional  
  (in the Sanctuary)

10:30 a.m. - “The Crossing”  
  (contemporary)  
  in Asbury Hall

**Advent Sermons**

*December 2nd*—Giving up on Perfect  
(10:30 Traditional—Sanctuary)

*December 9th*—Expect a Miracle  
(8:15 a.m. Morning Glory & 10:30 Traditional)

*December 16th*—Scandalous Love  
(8:15 a.m. Morning Glory & 10:30 “The Crossing”)

*December 23rd*—Jesus’ Wish List  
(All Sunday morning services)

*Christmas Eve* - “A different kind of Christmas: by a different road.”

**Advent Study**

Wednesdays starting **November 28th** at 6:30 p.m.  
Thursdays starting **November 29th** at 10:30 a.m.

**Sunday, December 2nd**

Morning Glory Cantata 8:15 a.m. (Asbury Hall)  
Bethlehem Town Square 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.  
*Come celebrate Christmas in a “different” way as 1st UMC takes you on a tour of Bethlehem that is sure to delight people of all ages.*

**Tuesday, December 4th**

Women’s Christmas Quiet Time 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.  
*This event gives you a unique way to reflect on the “reason for the season.”*

**Sunday, December 9th**

The Crossing: Christmas Special 10:30 a.m.-  
*A service of contemporary music.*  

“Blue Christmas” at 3:30 p.m.  
*A time of worship and fellowship for any who are finding it difficult to find joy.*  

Youth Christmas Party 5:00 to 8:30 p.m.  
*Meet in the gym and bring a white elephant gift*

**Wednesday, December 12th**

Inmate Party 6:00 p.m.

**Saturday, December 15th**

Chancel Choir Cantata at 6:00 p.m. Sanctuary

**Sunday, December 16th**

Chancel Choir Cantata 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary

**Monday, December 24th**

**Christmas Eve**

Live Nativity at 5:00 p.m.  
Covered Dish Supper at 6:30 p.m.  
Candlelight Communion Services at 7:30 p.m. & 10:00 p.m.
“Nuts” about sales
Demand for pecans was high this year as The United Methodist Women worked to raise money selling pecans. In the end the group sold 384 bags. During the Alternative Gift Fair and the days leading up to it the UMW sold 36 pounds of pecan halves, 25 pounds of pecan pieces, 61 bags of dark chocolate covered pecans, 6 bags of cinnamon glazed pecans and 25 bags of glazed pecans. The women will meet in January to discuss where the money from the sales will go.

A time for reflection
As the women decorate the Chrismon tree they are thinking ahead to one of their big holiday events. The Women’s Christmas Quiet Time provides you a way to remember the true “reason for the season.” Invite your mom, your sister, daughter, grandmother or any other female friend who could use an hour away to “rethink” Christmas.

The Women’s Quiet times are on Tuesday, December 4th at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m in Wesley Hall.

Tis the Season - To be NICE
As the busy holiday season speeds up, the United Methodist Women of 1st Maryville remind you to be more aware of service workers who bring your food in restaurants, take your money in stores, provide assistance in shopping, and perform other tasks throughout the community.

Try to make eye contact, call them by the name on their badge, wish them a good day, and Smile! If things are not going well, remember they are people too, they don't make the policy, they just enforce it. Some may be going through difficult times and a smile or friendly face could make a difference. You might even make a new friend.

A Christmas “original”
Terry Wilson, the Director of Music at 1st UMC Maryville plays a role in this year’s Maryville Singers Christmas Concert.

He will be conducting one of the numbers during the group’s performance. It is a piece he wrote called “Jesus Fairer Still.”

Terry invites everyone to come out and enjoy this afternoon of music.

Maryville Singers Christmas Concert
December 2nd at 2:30 p.m.
Maryville High School

Life Hurts
The raw truth is that some things about our current reality make us incredibly sad in this season of joy.

The grey feeling closes in on us amidst the bright reds and greens everywhere we look.

It is important for the church to offer a worship of healing time for those of us who hurt or grieve. 1st UMC will offer such a time as we observe “A different kind of Christmas” this year.

No matter the hurt, loss or brokenness, we will offer it to God. Life hurts. God heals.

“Blue Christmas” Worship
December 9th at 3 p.m.
Room 213
Thanksgiving provides us a time to reflect on the blessings God has given us. It is also a time for sharing and fellowship. This year the Welcome Table once again served up a free holiday meal to those who wanted one. This year 140 people came to Asbury Hall for a complete Thanksgiving dinner. Dozens of volunteers were also on hand to help.

The tables were brightly decorated in Fall splendor and a blessing:

For the food before us,
The friends beside us,
And the love between us,
We give Thee thanks.

A lot of preparation went into preparing Thursday’s meal. Chef Amelia Geis prepared the turkeys the day before and helped the new Young Adults group bake more than 30 pecan and pumpkin pies for the occasion.

Also, a special thanks goes out to the Christian Living Class for giving up a Friday to clean and organize the kitchen and pantry in Asbury Hall. Amelia would also like to thank the 60 volunteers who came to help!

A special thanks to Amelia Geis for coordinating the meal, the volunteers for setting up and cleaning up and all the others who worked to make this such great event.

Churchwide Thanksgiving Dinner 2012

(more pictures available on the church Facebook page)
Shoeboxes shipped

Soon, children in need will be receiving a shoebox filled with gifts and love. During this year’s “Operation Christmas Child” we collected 37 filled shoeboxes.

Thank you for participating and for making this holiday special for a child on the other side of the world! Hopefully your new friend will send a letter to your house.

Also, thanks to Leslie Morstatt for helping organize this mission project and

Two by two

With your help the children of the church are starting to fill the ark for Heifer Project. So far enough money has been collected to provide one llama, one cow, one sheep, and a flock of ducks.

This is the third year the children have participated in Heifer Project, an international organization which works with individual communities to help end poverty and hunger. Remember to bring the change you have collected throughout the week to Sunday School to help with this mission. Our goal is to raise enough money to buy two of each animal. Be sure and check out our boats outside Asbury Hall, upstairs near the Sanctuary and in the Children’s Hall.

Marriage Matters

Do you need a date night with your spouse? We’ve got an idea, one that would make a great Christmas gift. Jay & Laura Laffoon return to East Tennessee in January for an extended marriage enrichment experience filled with comedy and tools to help you and your spouse strengthen the bond between you.

Spread the word about this fun filled event brought to you by 1st UMC, Maryville.

Prepare to Laugh!
Prepare to Connect!

Ultimate Date Night:
The Weekend Experience
With Jay & Laura Laffoon
Friday, January 25th 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Saturday, January 26th 9:00 a.m. to Noon
Hilton Hotel—Alcoa
Tickets are $75 a couple
Available in the church office.

“Star of wonder, star of light…..”
It’s Christmas in a different light.

Our brand new event, “Bethlehem Town Square,” is sure to delight kids of all ages.

Join us as we take you an unforgettable tour of the town where Jesus was born.
Come live the Christmas story and learn more about the time and town where our Savior arrived.

Bethlehem Town Square
Sunday, December 2nd
5:00 to 7:00 p.m. (Asbury Hall)
New Website coming soon!
www.fumc-maryville.org

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Tue Nov 27 Dudes Study 7-8:30 PM @ Taco Bell on Gill St. (7th-12th grade dudes)
- Wed Nov 28 Chick-fil-A Prayer Breakfast 7-8 AM
- Wed Nov 28 Sacred Romance Study 3:45 PM @ Vienna Coffee (9-12th grade ladies)
- Wed Nov 28 Ladies Study @ Panera 7-8:30 PM (7-8th grade ladies)
- Thur Nov 29 Welcome Table Service Project 4:30-6:30 PM
- Sat Dec 1 Baking pumpkin bread as a gift for Maryville Junior High teachers 10 AM - 1 PM. Meet in Asbury Kitchen
- Sun Dec 2 Bethlehem Town Square photo booth 4:30 - 7 PM. Come, hang out, and enjoy sharing the biblical Christmas experience with children

Welcome Table service opportunity this Thursday 4:30-6:30 PM in the gym. Come and serve food to our brothers and sisters.