

The Tahlequah Testament

DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

At Tahlequah United Methodist Church we strive to be a Church of Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of ourselves and the world.

Connect with Tahlequah UMC online at
<https://linktr.ee/tahlequahumc>

Come Home for Christmas

PLANNED EVENTS

Studies

- Advent Study led by Pastor Shana following Worship on Sunday's
- Monday Night Zoom Advent Study 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday Pastor's Table 6:30 p.m. online.

Special Service or Events

- **December 5th, 2 p.m.** Music Celebration led by Arts Council
- **December 12th** in worship Christmas Sweater Sunday wear your favorite Christmas Sweater to worship as we celebrate the Christmas Cantata led by the Choir.
- **December 19th** Celebration Ringers will ring and a special presentation of the Spontaneous Christmas Story
- **December 21st, 6:30 p.m.** Blue Christmas Service in Sanctuary
- **December 24th 6:30 or 11 p.m.** Christmas Eve Worship
- **December 26th** Breakfast Potluck and Christmas Hymn Sing



Family Ministries Update

You can connect with her by emailing her at
youth@tahlequahumc.org

Hi everybody!

Through the fundraiser luncheon and dessert auction, we raised over \$3,500 for our Angel Tree mission! When we come together each year to provide these Christmas gifts for children of incarcerated parents, we are truly sharing the hope of the gospel message. Thank you so much to everyone who volunteered and all who attended this event!

Next is shopping for the gifts, which will take place Sunday 12/5. At 2:00 p.m., the Youth will be heading to Target to make the purchases and having dinner at Fudruckers afterward! Let us know if you would like to get involved. The Angel Tree reception will be Wednesday, 12/15 from 5pm-7pm in the Activity Building gym.

If you haven't checked out our Advent posters in the Narthex, stop by and color a bit! It is a great way to involve churchgoers of all ages in this season, and we look forward to displaying the finished posters!

December 19th We will have Youth and Children lead us in the Spontaneous Nativity Story in worship.

We are planning some exciting things for 2022! Starting **January 12th** we will kick off **Reconnect Wednesday** we will provide activities for Youth, Children and Adults from 5:30-6:30 on Wednesday nights during a parents' book study on Love-Centered Parenting by Crystal Paine. Let us know if you would like to join the study or volunteer with the Youth or kiddos!

This is always one of the busiest parts of the year for our families and the church, so be sure to stay up-to-date by checking our Facebook pages or by getting ahold of me to ask what's coming up!

Merry Christmas!
Abigail Shaw-Bolen

ReConnect
Wednesday Nights
5:30-6:30 p.m.
Starting Jan.12th 2022



Reflections from Pastor Matt Franks

You can connect with her by emailing her at
matt.franks@tahlequahumc.org

Join us Sunday's in person or online

Sunday school at 9 a.m. Worship at 10 a.m.

Do What We Can

Nothing is impossible for God." ~Luke 1:37 (CEB)

"You can do it! You can do it! Finish Strong!" The crowd shouts as the last kid in the race crosses the finish line of the Cross-Country Meet. Church We can do it, we can do it, we can finish this year strong. We do that by inviting God in and letting him set us free from that which binds us. I think this is why my favorite hymn during Advent is, Come Thou Long Expected Jesus. It invites Jesus to come and set us free.

As we come to the end of the 2021 race. Here are a few items to look forward to for our 2022 race.

Christmas Eve Help

Would you be interested in serving in worship on Christmas Eve? Please let me know.

Confirmation for Youth and Adults

United Methodists use the term "confirmation" to mark the first time a baptized Christian publicly "confirms" their intention to live the vows of the baptismal and membership covenant and so becomes a professing member of the local congregation and The United Methodist Church. (<https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-what-do-i-need-to-know-about-confirmation-in-the-united-methodist-church>)

We are going to offer an eight-week confirmation class for Youth in 6th grade to Adults. During the eight-week sessions, the group will learn about the Christian Faith and Methodism.

We have an opportunity for the Church to help with Confirmation. We will need people to help provide a meal for the group. We will need mentors that will be a support for the person during this journey and we will need a table host that will help lead the smaller group conversations.

Setup Introduction Meeting January 30th at 5:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

First Class begins February 6th at 5:30 p.m. Room to be determined.

We will celebrate the Confirmands on April 24th in Worship

If you are interested in helping or joining the class, please contact me at matt.franks@tahlequahumc.org or call the office.

Men's Bible Study 6:30 a.m. at McDonald's Date TBD

It's time to start back again with the Morning Men's Bible Study we will meet at 6:30 a.m. Bring Your Bible and we will meet in the lobby area as allowed. We hope to have a start date soon. Keep an eye out for the date.

Pastor's Table Online Premiers at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday's

This month on the Pastor's Table, I have invited Dr. Bob to come, and share thoughts and teach us about the special hymn we are looking at on Sunday mornings in worship. You can find the Pastor's Table here:

<https://bit.ly/pastorstabletumc>

Year-End Giving Reminder

As 2021 comes to a close we are chipping away very well at our Building Debt as of Dec. 1st it sits at \$133,553.77 that debt is close to being eliminated. We still have 2021 Apportionments to handle. We have paid in full our District Apportionments for the year we still have \$20,665 left of our apportionments and \$4,927 of the Mission and Ministries Apportionments.

When the cold weather of February hit we were hit with a substantial utility bill that has hindered us from being able to pay apportionments and other support like we would like to. We were hoping we would be able to make it through but giving did drop a little and we are doing all that we can to tighten up our belts even more.

Would you be willing to increase your support of Tahlequah UMC these last few weeks of the year so that we can be in ministry all over the world? If you would like to find out more about how you can support TUMC, you can reach out to me.

Here is your yearly reminder that for contributions to count for 2021 they must be in the office by Dec. 31st. By Mail: must be postmarked on or before December 31, 2021, They can be mailed to **Tahlequah UMC 300 W. Delaware, Tahlequah, Ok 74464**, And for our Online giving they must be completed by 11:59 p.m. Central Standard Time, December 31, 2021. Go to tahlequahumc.org/give to give online.

Thank you!

Thank you for all that you have done in 2021. We have overcome some big challenges and yet we have still been able to transform the world. Thank you.

Peace be with you,
Pastor Matt Franks



Reflections from Pastor Shana Dry

You can connect with her by emailing her at
shana.dry@tahlequahumc.org

LOVE is Coming

“The time is coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill my gracious promise with the people of Israel and Judah. In those days and at that time, I will raise up a righteous branch from David’s line, who will do what is just and right in the land. In those days, Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is what he will be called: The LORD is Our Righteousness. Jeremiah 33:14-16

I LOVE Christmas. It truly is the most wonderful time of the year. It brings me great joy to see all the Christmas lights, to bake all the goodies, to decorate our tree, and to see all the children’s faces light up so many times throughout this season. I truly love the hustle and bustle of the holiday.

All this is to say there is something to be said about this holiday that shakes me in to reality and reaches me at my core. Not everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the lights, homemade warm food, be surrounded by friends and family, and to feel and know they are loved.

A Christmas hymn that is fairly new, written in 1994, “Star Child” which is in our Faith We Sing books touches on this point very clearly. *“Star-Child, Earth-Child, go-between of God, Love-Child, Christ Child, heaven’s lightning rod, this year, let the day arrive when Christmas comes for everyone alive!”*

I’ll admit Charles Dickens’ *Christmas Carol* and Hallmark greeting cards condition us to view Christmas sentimentally. The Christmas tree in our lovely sanctuary and homes reshape our thinking in ways that might almost suggest that the Son of God was born in a cozy rural bed and breakfast accompanied by cuddly farm animals with everything smelling like pine and hot apple cider.

When Pastor Matt asked me to write about my favorite Christmas hymn, Star Child was my first thought. By no means do I want to be Scrooge here but I believe why I like this song so much is that it reminds me that not everyone has experienced the joy of Christmas.

Through this song in very economical language children of all ages and stations of life are being recognized. “Street child, beat child, hurt child, used child, grown child, old child, sad child, lost child. I love that all these children are created in the image of the Star-Child, earth-Child and the Hope for peace Child. The Christ Child is for everyone ALIVE.

This Christmas I will work harder at being aware of my surroundings and sharing God’s love to ALL,
Get ready my wonderful church family LOVE is Coming!
God Loves You and So Do I!
Peace & Love Always,
Pastor Shana

Love the people; Feed the People an NSU Wesley Update

The NSU Wesley has been very busy serving and loving students on the NSU campus.

We have truly been blessed by serving others. We have completed our coat drive, and are so very grateful for all that donated to this great cause. We supplied several good clean coats to the Day Center this past week. Our Love Thy Neighbor Food pantry is up and running and we have served many students in need.

Our Club Sandwich on Thursday's is a dedicated beautiful service project. We make 140 peanut butter and jelly, and ham and cheese sandwiches for those in need, at the Day Center every Thursday morning. Our Wesley Wednesdays are now serving on average 130-150 students' free lunch from 11-2 every Wednesday.

Our biggest service project of the semester is fast approaching. We will be showing God's love by serving our students during final week. We will be open Monday thru Thursday 9am to 7pm and on Friday 9am to 2pm. We will be offering breakfast, lunch, and dinner. There are so many students that by the end of the semester do not have any cafeteria points, and have finals all week long. This is where we step in and provide a warm meal and a comfortable place to sit and relax. A home away from home is what we bring to so many students.

Finals Week is Dec. 13-17th. Lots of fruit, snacks, and sandwich supplies are needed to make this week possible. If you can help us with this service project, please drop by the items at the church or the Wesley Foundation.

We thank you so much for all the support and love that you give to our campus ministry.

May God Bless You and Yours during this Advent season.

God Loves You and So Do We.

Pastor Shana and the NSU Wesley



United Methodist Women News

The Tahlequah unit of Green Country District UMW executive committee met on Tuesday, November 30, 2021 at 10:00 in the Atrium. Jane Bond, Kathy Daniel, and Judy Young were present to discuss the business of our local unit.

District President of UMW, Cindy Griffin, sent a reminder that it was time for us to send our local officer list to Lea Mercer for the upcoming district yearbook. The co-chairs will continue to be Jane Bond and Judy Young, Treasurer is Kathy Daniel and Secretary is Joy Boren.

We worked on our Mission Today report that is due in December. After filling out that report, our unit will receive a silver award for our year of service. This is not as high as usual, but not bad for a year of cancellations. We are going to have enough money to finish out our payments for mission as promised, thanks to the generosity of our congregation and the hard work of all of our women. We especially want to thank those women who have moved away but continue to support our unit with their generous donations.

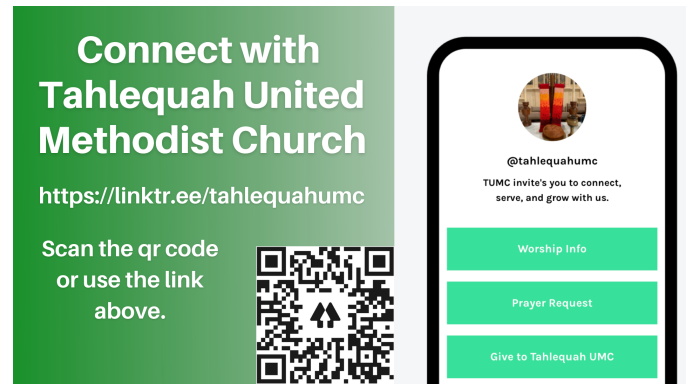
We were unable to finish the last item on our agenda, next year's budget, so tabled this until Thursday when Jane and Kathy will meet to make the changes necessary for the coming year. We will be printing a new yearbook this year, so we need all of the changes for each circle to add to that book.


The next general meeting will be **Tuesday, December 14** at 11:00 for our annual Christmas luncheon at Vidalia's. The program will be Circle IV presenting a program about how the bible teaches us to mentor our younger women to help them through difficult times, such as Sarah and Mary. Music will be provided by Kathy, Hazuki, and Judy.

Cookson Hills Center is needing people to wrap presents again this year. Their number is 918-457-5181. If you could get a group together to ride down there, they would appreciate your help. They will be open for three weeks beginning December 6th. You can work from 9 to 12 or 1 to 3.

Thank you all for making this a successful year. Let's celebrate!

Your local executive committee,
Jane, Kathy, Joy, and Judy



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