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## ***FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK***

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### **From the Pastor's Desk**

I have a **LOT** of important topics to cover this month.

#### **Christmas Eve Ornament**

As I wrote last month, we plan to give every person who attends our Christmas Eve service an ornament related to our stained glass project. That way, even if someone did not win one of the auctions, every person can still be a part of this great project.

The ornaments are all made of epoxy and almost all of them have stained glass in them: either pieces, or chunks, or little shards. A very small number have wood in them from the old pews. Remember, this material came from the old church and is about 100 years old. Most of the ornaments are various shapes of crosses with a few other fun shaped thrown in (as shown in the photo).

On Christmas Eve we have two services: one at 6:30 pm and one at 11 pm. Between both services we average 350 or even 400 people. So join us!

#### **Pastor Kathy McKinley**

Thank you for welcoming Associate Pastor Kathy McKinley into our church family. She has really hit the ground running and I'm so glad she is here to help out. Since I know her goal is to know everybody, let me remind you that it can take 6 months to a year for a pastor to feel like he or she really has a handle on names in a big new place. She has about 400 or more names to learn, so thank you for your patience. I know there are times when I'm still struggling because we have so very many visitors who come to our church.

This is a great time to also remind you to please wear your nametags to church. Not only does it help you, but it greatly helps new folks to begin to learn the names of people who worship with them.

#### **Medical Clinic Mission Project**

The Medical Mission, supported by multiple churches in Crestview, that was scheduled for November was postponed. I heard that there was some kind of disappointing scheduling mix-up with the High School.

That Mission will be rescheduled for some time in the Spring of 2026. Listen out for more details for this important project.

#### **Changes Coming**

As a pastor, I try to avoid springing change on people. I have served some churches which had previous pastors who simply met with two or three people and made a major changes to the church without any preparation at all for the congregation. We want to avoid that.

So I wanted to tell you about a few changes that are happening. A few have started and more will come next year.

##### **A. Crossroads Center Worship Decoration**

This change already happened in November. We have installed mounts in the side walls so that we can hang worship banners. Previously, we could show two banners up front by the screens, but now we can display 6 more (three per side). This change will serve multiple purposes. First, it will add color, spiritual messaging and inspiration to our worship. Further, it will add to the sound quality of the room by reducing echoing. We will be buying more worship banners in the future, and if you are interested in helping with this project, please let me know.

##### **B. Main Sanctuary**

We are slowly planning a few significant changes to the Main Sanctuary. Some are cosmetic, some are functional and structural. Our Trustees are in the middle of coming up with a plan for some structural changes. Here are some of the things we're considering and the problems we will try to address.

1. We will be adding the possibility of worship banners for special occasions which will be hung over the choir. You will see the



first usage on Christmas Eve. I believe these will be a beautiful addition.

2. We are planning on returning our main altar to its old usage. Because of the screen located at the back side of the altar, we are not able to place flowers arrangements, candles or a cross as in the past. We hope to return these in the future.

3. There is a proposal to relocate screens. We do not want to totally remove screens from the sanctuary. The current screen served a good purpose for a while. I think that the illustrations shown during the sermon are helpful for most people (and I put a lot of thought into what goes into my sermon with these). Furthermore, the screens are especially meaningful when we run slideshows of people's lives at funerals. Many people find these incredibly touching and we want to keep that functionality while not marring the distinctive looks of the front of our sanctuary.

The problem is not so much the screens but the location and the quality. The images are often very faded. And aside from requiring the top of the altar to be bare as described in #2, another problem is the air conditioner makes the screen wave and move. This is a little distracting in the sanctuary, but it can be very distracting online. The camera operators sometimes have to switch angles when the A/C comes on. I've also heard that it will be pleasant to remove the distracting sound the screen makes going up and down as well as the visual obstruction in front of the beautiful organ.

Therefore, we are exploring moving to TV screens to a location up top on the side up in the rafters. We already have two screens in that area now for the choir so they can see the sermon images and this would simply add two more which face the congregation. The screen sizes will be much smaller than the big single screen we currently have, but the images will be sharper and the colors more rich than the faded images were currently have.

4. The Stage Modification from several years ago is both helpful and has introduced some problems. It was helpful in adding a lot of space and that platform even held a praise band at one time. I remember when we became a Global Methodist Church, on that Sunday we had about 23 people join and they all came up on that stage. I confess that was great to see.

But when it comes to worship style, I think for the foreseeable future, we have settled into a routine and pattern for our church that traditional worship will generally happen in the main sanctuary and contemporary worship will generally happen in the Crossroads Center. So I don't envision a band on that stage in the future.

Furthermore (and more critically for me), I'm very concerned about the choke-point that our current stage created (I'm rather safety conscious). I have long felt that the corners of the stage are far too close to the wall and the space is totally inadequate for people to escape in an emergency. Only one person may pass at a time.

There are other consequences of our current design. We can no longer get a casket into the sanctuary from the doors at the drive-thru near the office because it is too tight. Also, Communion and prayer have been affected. We currently cannot easily serve communion at the altar nor can we easily pray for someone at the altar.

Furthermore, for those of you who have a perfectionistic eye for symmetry, you already know that the center steps are not visually perfectly in line with the organ and the altar. A minor point, I admit, but noticeable to some (and I would be in that number).

Therefore, the Trustees are in the early stages of exploring reducing the stage size with a couple of possible goals. The first goals are just described: the ability to get behind the kneeling rail for communion and prayer, improved safety for emergency exits, and possibly the ability to move caskets from the drive-thru. We may not be able to achieve all of that, but this is what they are exploring.

***But there is one more change which is related.***

5. Pew locations.

Some of the above discussions all began with me a few months ago when I presented three problems to the trustees wishing that we could address them:

- a. side aisle is too narrow at the corners of the stage,
- b. zero handicap accessibility to the stage (this one is very hard and I'm not sure we can solve this right now), and pews that are too close together.

On this last point, I have noticed that our pews are not evenly distributed throughout. In some, the space between pews is adequate (more toward the front), while in some it is honestly terrible (more toward the back). Some are so close that it is impossible to move past someone. The solution is that we need more room and need more precise and consistent spacing between the pews.

One way to achieve this is to remove one pew per side- and honestly, that is not currently the most desirable solution for the trustees. It is still a possibility, but we think we really need the seating- especially as we continue to grow.

Another way to get more room is to reduce the stage. That is the solution being looked at right now. Also, we could remove the modesty rail up front. I like the modesty rail function and would hate to see it go, but very few sit on the very first row and reducing the stage and removing the modesty rail together might give us just the space we need to re-position the pews at a more desirable distance. Furthermore, neither the Chapel nor the Crossroads Center worship areas use a modestly rail.

Well, these are all big changes with a lot of things which will be affected and will need to be addressed, like: where puppets happen with the children, the handbell choir location, and the location of baptisms and weddings.

So please pray for the trustees and your pastor as we work through these issues. Decisions have to be made, and we might need to come up with some funding for this project since it will not be in the budget. We will not all agree on the changes, but I hope we can be supportive of the intent of the faithful work that is trying to be done.

When will these changes take place? The ones related to screens and high altar may happen soon. The structural changes will not happen until some time next year.

My Hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus blood and righteousness.

-Pastor Ronnie

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## NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### **FMC Christmas 2025 Schedule**

#### **Parents Night Out**

Friday, Dec 5 at 6:00PM on Kids Street  
Sign up at [Firstcrestview.com](http://Firstcrestview.com)

#### **Angel Tree Gifts**

Due on Sunday, Dec 7 in the CRC

#### **Crestview Community Choir Concert**

Sunday, Dec 7 from 3-4:30PM in the Main Sanctuary

#### **FMC Christmas Party Hosted by 8th Ave Men Monday**

Dec 8 at 6:00PM in the CRC

#### **Youth Christmas Party**

Wednesday, Dec 10 at 6:00PM in the Youth Rm Family

#### **Gingerbread Decorating Event**

Saturday, Dec 13 from 9:45AM-11:45AM in the CRC

#### **Chancel Choir Cantata**

Sunday, Dec 14 at the 8:30AM & 11:00AM in the Main Sanctuary  
Preaching Service at 9:45AM in the CRC

#### **Children's Christmas Play**

Wednesday, Dec 17 at 6:00PM in the CRC

#### **Christmas Eve Candlelight & Holy Communion Service**

Wednesday, Dec 24 at 6:30PM (FB Live) & 11:00PM in the Main Sanctuary

\*Our Christmas Eve services are family friendly,  
therefore nursery & Kids Street programs will be unavailable.

*Our Christmas Eve offering will go toward  
'White Christmas / Embrace Florida Kids'.*

*This ministry provides homes, healing, and hope for vulnerable children & families.*

#### **Church Office Holiday Closure**

Dec 24, 2025 - Jan 4, 2026

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### **Poinsettia Dedications**

We will be collecting orders for poinsettias in honor or in memory of a loved one!

You can place an order from **Nov 30-Dec 14** by completing a poinsettia envelope order form to include your payment. Envelopes will be placed at the entrance to each service. You will also be able to download an order form from the website at [firstcrestview.com](http://firstcrestview.com) and return it to the church office.

A special Christmas day bulletin insert will list all who purchased a poinsettia and who is being honored/remembered.

Poinsettias will be ready to pick up after either of the Christmas Eve worship services, which will be held at 6:30PM and 11:00PM in the Main Sanctuary on Dec 24.

Poinsettias will be \$15 each and all proceeds will go to Pastor Kris and his ministry in Poland.



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## MINISTRY UPDATES

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### Wesleyan Child Care Center

The month of December is a joyful and busy time at Wesleyan Child Care Center as we celebrate the Christmas season together! Our classrooms are filled with songs, laughter, and the sparkle of Christmas crafts as children learn about the true meaning of giving and love. We take this special time to remind our students that Christmas is not just about presents, but about sharing kindness and joy with others. Families can look forward to festive activities, holiday programs, and opportunities to give back to our community. As we close out the year, we are grateful for the blessings of our Wesleyan families and the light of Christ that shines brightly through the hearts of our children.

-Osa Bell / WCCC Director & Staff



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### Children's Ministry

We are so excited to be doing 2 Christmas events this year: a Christmas play AND our annual Gingerbread House party!

The play performance will be on **Wed, Dec 17**, at 6:00PM in the Crossroads Center. We are having play practices on Wednesdays at 6:00 on Kids Street. If your child is interested in participating in the play, it is not too late to join us for practices.

We will have a gingerbread house decorating party on **Sun, Dec 13**, in the morning from 9:45-11:00AM in the Crossroads Center Wesley Hall. This is a family event for parents to decorate a house with their child/children.

-Vicky Anchor



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### Winter Small Groups

Time to cozy up this winter with a Small Group study!  
We have many classes to choose from.  
Visit [Firstcrestview.com](http://Firstcrestview.com) to see the list and to sign up-  
we're saving you a seat!



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### Missions / Shoebox Update

#### Thank you!

Thank you, Church Family for embracing our new ministry, Operation Christmas Child. And especially to Marianne Peyton for bringing this ministry to us.

We will have given 136 children a shoebox full of things for Christmas. Who would have thought you could get so much in a little shoebox?! Soccer balls?? Fishing kits, shirts, dresses, cars, dolls, crayons, pencils, books and a whole array of things you wouldn't think of.

Yes indeed. Our boxes are full and were transported to a distribution center on November 20.

These boxes go all over the world to children who may never have had someone tell them they love them, or received a gift just for them, or heard of our God and His son Jesus. But, because of you, this is happening.

Thank you also to those who gave extra money to help with shipping! This was a great summer project, and I look forward to doing it again next summer. For more information on Operation Christmas Child go to [www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child](http://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child).

Have a wonderful Christmas and 2026.

Blessings, Pam Hight- FMC Missions Chairperson



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### Soup Kitchen Ministry

**THANK ALL OF YOU** for continuing to support our Soup Kitchen to provide delicious homemade hot meals each Saturday. Your donations and support keep us sustainable coupled with the nonprofit donations of bread and pastries allow us to continue to meet our goal to provide healthy full meal choices for our community in need. Did you know that:

- 100% of your donations support that goal and
- 100% of our Soup Kitchen teams consist of Christian volunteers.

Sixteen years strong, feeding our community in need. If you happen to come by the Fellowship Hall (outside the building), check out the new signs that highlight the location of the Soup Kitchen, and provide day and time food service is available to our community. The purpose is to provide community situational awareness, both online and onsite.

We have some community farmers that periodically share their eggs which make great casseroles that are enjoyed by our hungry community in need. With Fall/Winter around the corner, we have separate volunteers who donate socks and gloves which helps to keep people warmer while Yarnies share their labors of love with handmade winter hats.

We always welcome your youth to volunteer in the Soup Kitchen, who that need volunteer hours to qualify for college credits or scouts to qualify for a patch. Contact Deb Lubas Soup Kitchen Coordinator.

Thanksgiving and Christmas meals are already being planned by our Souper Chef Steve. These special holiday meals are planned to be served 22 Nov 2025 and 27 Dec 2025 for our community in need. All of you are welcome to volunteer during those events and share your donated handmade desserts with our community in need.

Are you curious as to why volunteers choose to support the Soup Kitchen Mission? There are many passages from the Bible. Here is one of them, Matthew 25:35 - I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.

Requesting your prayers of healing for our Soup Kitchen volunteers Bonnie and Robert.

#### **How to Support the Soup Kitchen**

- Want to join us volunteering for the First Methodist of Crestview Soup Kitchen Mission? We invite you to contact us at [greenhalghdj@cox.net](mailto:greenhalghdj@cox.net) or text 401-742-4898.
- Want to donate fruit or eggs please place them in the Soup Kitchen refrigerator and text me at 401-742-4898. Want to donate socks or gloves please text me at 401-742-4898.
- Want to donate to First Methodist of Crestview Soup Kitchen Mission? Contact the office at 850-682-2018, with Soup Kitchen indicated on the envelope or NOTES section.
- Please continue to Follow on Facebook @FirstCrestview or our website FirstCrestview.com

Respectfully, Deb Lubas, First Methodist of Crestview SOUP Kitchen Coordinator, 401-742-4898

Matthew 25:35 -I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.



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### Yarn Ministry

#### **Merry Christmas from Yarnieville!**

Our end of year wrap up has us reflecting on this past year and all that God has provided and blessed us with.

Thank you, church, for all of the yarn donations and your cheerful encouragement. It makes what we do even more joyful

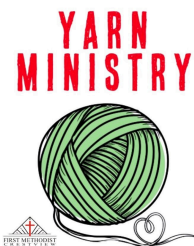


especially knowing that we have a church that supports us and our ministry!  
One of our special projects this year was to support our Children's Ministry Christmas Play. We've had loads of fun stitching scarves for our children and those who will attend. Just wait til you see what we've been up to!  
Our last meeting of the year will be **Tues, Dec 9, at 6:00PM** in Rm 213 aka Yarnia.  
We're looking forward to connecting & reaching out to others to further God's kingdom through loads of yarn and love in 2026!

-Cathrin Owens

*"May the kindness of the Lord our God be upon us; And confirm for us the work of our hands; Yes, confirm the work of our hands." Psalm 90:17*

*"We look for wool and linen, and work with our hands in delight." Proverbs 31:13*



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### **Crestview Prayer Network**

Learn what is going on in the Crestview Christian community!

The Crestview Prayer Network meets the first Wednesday of each month to share fellowship and goings-on in the different churches in the North Okaloosa Area.

The next meeting for the Crestview Prayer Network will be **Dec 3** at noon, at Hideaway Pizza downtown.

Come pray for your hometown!



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## **CALENDARS**

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### **November Greeters, Ushers & Liturgists**

#### **Morning Glory / Christ Chapel 8:30AM**

##### **Greeters**

12/7. John & Cynthia Leitschuck

12/14. Debbe Watson

12/21. Mike & Betsy Roy

12/28. Terry & Gail Laskaskie

##### **Ushers**

John & Cynthia Leitschuck

**Liturgists (In Sunday order):** 1 & 3- Alesha Dabbs 2 & 4- Bob McCrory

#### **Contemporary / The Crossroads Center 9:45AM**

**Greeters & Ushers:** 1. Jan Lee 2. John & Marcy Pennell 3. Haley Smith 4. Keller family

**Liturgists (In Sunday order):** 1. Kathy McKinley 2. Aimee Keller 3. Nell Sutherland 4. Jody Woodward

#### **Traditions / Main Sanctuary 11:00AM**

##### **Greeters & Side Aisles**

12/7 Steve and Kathy Fowler

12/14 Phillip Mathis and Melanie Mathis

12/21 Connie Stapp and Glenda McMasters

12/28 Ed and Joanne Guzowski

##### **Ushers**

12/7 Tom Saunders and Dax Reeves

12/14 Burt Colt and Eddie Hager

12/21 Ed Guzowski and Tom Giovanini

12/28 Eddie Hager and Tom Saunders

##### **Office Door**

12/7-12/28 Jim Hight

##### **Lights & Door Locks**

12/7 Burt Colt

12/14 Burt Colt

12/21 Dax Reeves

12/28 Dax Reeves

**Liturgists (In Sunday order):** 1. Thomas Raiche 2. Kathy McKinley 3. Matt Minyard 4. Sara Fordyce 5. Mike Steen

### **Christmas Eve / Wed, Dec 24, Main Sanctuary**

**6:30PM**

**Greeters & Side Aisles**

Connie Stapp and Melanie Mathis

Ushers

Dax Reeves and Jim Hight  
Alisha Dabbs and Jacob Dabbs  
Phillip Mathis and Tom Saunders

Up-stairs Ushers

Robert Dabbs and Jacob Dabbs

Office Door

Gary Johnson

**11:00PM**

Greeters & Side Aisles

Connie Stapp & Glenda McMasters

Ushers

Ed Guzowski and Dax Reeves

Office Door

Jim Hight

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**Important Dates In December**

Dec 3- Crestview Prayer Network 12:00PM Hideaway Pizza  
Dec 5- Women's Service Group 10:00AM CRC  
Dec 7- Crestview Community Choir Concert 3-4:30PM Main Sanctuary  
Dec 8- FMC Christmas Party hosted by 8th Ave Methodist Men 6:00PM CRC  
Dec 9- Worship Committee 5:30PM Conf Rm  
Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213 (last one of the year!)  
Dec 10- Youth Christmas 6:00PM Youth Rm  
Dec 13- Kids St Gingerbread Event 9:45-11:00AM CRC  
Dec 14- Chancel Choir Christmas Cantata 8:30 & 11:00AM Main Sanctuary  
Last Day to Order Poinsettias  
Dec 15- January Newsletter Deadline  
Dec 16- Missions 6:30PM RM 213  
Dec 17- Kids St Christmas Play 6:00PM CRC, No Youth Group  
Dec 20- Game Night for Grown Ups 4:30-7:00PM CRC  
Dec 24- Candlelight Christmas Eve Services 6:30 & 11:00PM Main Sanctuary  
Dec 31- No Kids St or Youth Group  
Dec 24 to Jan 4- Office Closed for Christmas Break

\*FH- Fellowship Hall, Conf Rm- Conference Room, CRC- The Crossroads Center, Youth Rm- Youth Room  
Please see [firstcrestview.com](http://firstcrestview.com) calendar for any updates or changes

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**Looking Forward to January**

Jan 5- Church office reopens for 2026! Happy New Year!  
Jan 2- Women's Service Group 10:00AM CRC  
Jan 4- Epiphany Sunday  
Jan 6- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213  
Jan 7- Crestview Prayer Network 12:00PM Hideaway Pizza  
Jan 11- Exploring Membership Class 3:00PM Asbury Rm/CRC  
Jan 12- 8th Ave Methodist Men 6:00PM FH  
Jan 17- Game Night for Grown Ups 4:30-7:00PM CRC  
Jan 19- Feb Newsletter Deadline  
Office Closed / Staff Retreat  
Jan 21- CommUNITY Dinner / 8th Ave Methodist Men Chili Cook-Off  
Church Council 6:30PM CRC  
Jan 27- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213  
Jan 28- Winter Small Groups Begin

\*FH- Fellowship Hall, Conf Rm- Conference Room, CRC- The Crossroads Center, Youth Rm- Youth Room  
Please see [firstcrestview.com](http://firstcrestview.com) calendar for any updates or changes

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***A MOMENT OF REFLECTION***

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