



THE VINE

Aspen Hill Christian Church

13501 Georgia Avenue, Aspen Hill, Maryland 20906

(301)871-7222

Pastor: Dr. D. Robert Chance

DECEMBER 2023

BY CHANCE Advent



Advent is one of my favorite times of the year. Four weeks to anticipate the celebration of the birth of Jesus is a time of preparing my heart, my attitude, my spirit for the beautiful moment of the birth of Christ.

I have always enjoyed Christmas long before I became a Christian. The difference was I celebrated and enjoyed the secular version of Christmas.

The spiritual dimension of Christmas wasn't even on my radar. The Christmas tree, the lights on the house, the shopping for just the right gift for those I love, the smells, the tastes, the whole look of anticipating Christmas was beyond special. Every year came with its own special memories.

Among my favorite memories are the long-ago years I shared my Christmas anticipation and celebration with the new love of my life who later became the lifelong love of my life. Buying special presents for special people was important but buying a special present for Mary was essential. I also enjoy remembering my dad's excitement on Christmas Eve. He could never wait for us to get up Christmas morning to see what Santa had brought for us kids and would wake us up around midnight to see that Santa had come and gone. Yes, there are a thousand and one special memories from growing up and celebrating Christmas.

Once I became a Christian Christmas took on a whole new and deeper meaning. I still enjoy all the secular customs and traditions of the Christmas season but now I have deeply spiritual understandings of what Christmas is about. I especially enjoy the Advent Wreath as we light a new candle each week of Advent and think about a different aspect of what the season means. Probably, my favorite Advent Wreath thought is the idea that Advent is the time to try the key to the door of our heart. It may have gathered rust and now is the time to oil it and reconnect with the things that truly matter. I also enjoy sending and receiving Christmas Cards. I take a lot of time picking out just the right card for friends and family. I also enjoy the cards I receive from people as they nearly always reflect something deeper about the sender.

Christmas is much more than trains and cookies and office gatherings and exchanging presents. It is a time to rediscover the child within us. Christmas. Christmas about the celebrating the birth of Christ, both in the larger context of the world but equally importantly and maybe more importantly in our own life. Advent means "to come" and refers to the coming of the Savior of mankind into the world. What does Christmas mean to you? I support that it brings wonderful memories but hope it means much more. To think of celebrating the Savior's birth is to think about the meaning of the Lord being among us, not just in the long ago past of a land far away but in our own lives and in our own land today.

I hope you will take advantage of the beautiful programs here at the church and in the community to come close to the manger and like the Wise Men of old make the long journey to see the Savior and kneel at his manger to worship him. Enjoy the cookies, have fun with the toy trains, have a good laugh with Santa, sing your heart out but above all "come and see" and "kneel and pray".

Merry Christmas from my heart to yours.

*NEWS AMONG OUR
CHURCH FAMILY
PRAYER LIST*

Please let us know if you know of someone who is sick or is a shut-in. Thank you.

Ed Wachtman – Please keep Ed in your prayers.

Edwina Meheaux – Please keep in your prayers. Give her a call on the phone.

Patty Collins- Please keep Patty in your prayers. She loves telephone calls too.

Michael Lastre – Keep in your prayers

Susan Montgomery – Keep in your prayers

Patty Clark-Sam Splaine's mother. Phone calls welcome.

The people of Ukraine- Keep in your prayers

The people in the war in Israel.

All those who suffer from grief and loss and who struggle with illness in any form.

There are always others—keep all in your prayers, named or unnamed. Let us know if we've missed someone.



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Edwina Meheux
- 5 Pam Canova
- 11 Jeff Price
- 14 Stephen Sharp
- 16 Sandra Boyd
- 17 Bob & Pam Canova
- 20 Ashley Owen
- 23 Marjorie Flaherty
- 26 Gwen Mott
- 29 Donald & Holly Brooks

PLEASE LET THE CHURCH OFFICE KNOW IF YOUR BIRTHDATE AND/OR ANNIVERSARY DATE IS WRONG OR MISSING, SO WE MAY CORRECT IT.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

THE 2023 CHURCH DIRECTORY IS AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE DURING OFFICE HOURS. ONE COPY PER HOUSEHOLD, PLEASE.

NEWS FROM OUR MINISTRIES



FELLOWSHIP...Amy Buckingham/Mary Chance

Caroling Event

December 12

Join us for our Christmas Caroling event on December 12th. Please bring a plate of cookies to share!!

The annual fruit sale was a success! Together we sold 219 fruit boxes. We are looking for volunteers to help with fruit delivery on the 8th and help with fruit pick up on the 9th.

Please reach out to Mary or Rose if you're interested in volunteering.



PROPERTY...John Small

Each year about this time we put together "Snow Teams" to clear the snow from our sidewalks during the winter months. Montgomery County treats us like a business which means we have 24 hours from the time the snow (2" and above) stops falling to clear it from the sidewalks in front of the church or pay a large fine. Of course, we need our own sidewalk inside the driveway shoveled too.

Due to people moving out of the area, we are down to a very small number of volunteers. In the past we had two people per team with each team serving for a two-week period between the end of November and March. Last winter we only had one person per team, which isn't enough. We need more than one. We have a good big snow blower, salt on hand and hopefully a snowplow on our mower ready for use. We do pay for the lot to be cleared, but to add the cost of a person(s) to clear the sidewalks is prohibitive.

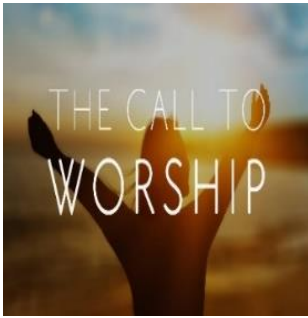
If you can volunteer to join our snow teams for the coming winter please let Dr. Chance or me know as soon as possible, but no later than two weeks from now. This way we can put our teams together and provide a schedule for the Snow Team members.

If you are interested in helping with our property ministry to keep our church facilities in good condition, please contact me (johnsmallmb66@gmail.com).



OUTREACH...Connie Spoon

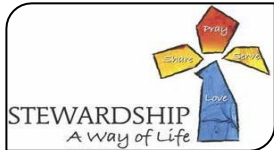
Our Thanksgiving basket project was a tremendous success thanks to the generous members of the congregation. We were able to bless 30 local families with a lovely Thanksgiving meal. As the Christmas season approaches, we will collect new unwrapped toys for the Georgian Forest Elementary School children. Please consider a donation to place under the tree. Deadline is set for December 17th.



WORSHIP...Gwen Mott via Carol Knott

On December 3 the Advent season begins and we will celebrate the coming of our Lord. The four Sundays of Advent will lead up to Christmas Day as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Each Sunday a candle will be lit and the meaning of each candle will be described. Plan to attend on December 24, Christmas Eve, for this special worship service.

Enjoy the full meaning of the Christmas season with us



STEWARDSHIP...

Please Don't forget to send your offering in or place it directly in the offering plate on Sunday morning. You can also mail it to the church or drop it in the mail slot outside the main doors. We will soon be launching our Annual Every Member Commitment program. Be on the lookout for a thoughtful and creative and important EMC effort as we seek your pledges for our 2024 ministries. The cost of living is somewhere around 2.5 % so any increase in your giving of less than that is actually a cut in your giving. Faithful Living Equals Faithful Giving!

Your offering makes the Lord's ministry possible! Thank you for all you do!



Highlights from the Board Meeting, November 8, 2023



- The meeting was opened with prayer and devotional.
- Treasurer and Financial Secretary Reports were received.
- The Pastor's Report was received.
- Ministry Reports were shared by the Ministry Chairs and good discussion was held in response to the ministries taking place in the life of the church.
- Upcoming events were reviewed and final details discussed.



FACTS & FIGURES: WORSHIP ATTENDANCE FOR OCTOBER

The good news is attendance is increasing and heading in the right direction. The bad news is there is a long way to go to reach pre-pandemic numbers. If you haven't returned yet, now is the time and please invite and bring friends and family to join you.

(INCLUDES BOTH IN PERSON AND ONLINE)

November Average Total: 55 (32 in person /17 online)

Year to Date Average: Total: 56 (34 in person /22 online)

"I was glad when they said unto me, "Let us go into the house of the Lord." Psalm 122:1

11:00 AM Sunday

The Worship service will also continue to be offered live and online. Keep checking www.aspenhillcc.org, click on the You Tube link and choose the date you want.

Worship in person at 11:00 every Sunday & Live on our YouTube Channel



We are doing our best to get people back in person, but we do understand that some people cannot make it to church on certain Sundays. To view online click www.aspenhillcc.org, then click on the Watch Us Live on YouTube icon. Once at our YouTube Page be sure to click the thumbs-up icon and subscribe to our channel. You can also make any nice comments you want to, that helps us be more visible. Comments help drive our visibility to others up. Share the links for our weekly worship with your friends and neighbors.

Please submit your articles, updates, and information we might like to include in future newsletters to Rosemary for possible inclusion in the future.

The deadline for the January newsletter is December 17.

NEW Church Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM-3:00 PM
Friday 9:00 AM-2:00 pm



Please let the office know how you would like your newsletter delivered! USPS, Email or Both.
office@aspenhillcc.org or call 301-871-7222



Annual Caroling Sing-a-Long Join us as we gather around the piano with hot chocolate , cider & cookies sing our favorite Christmas Carols. December 12, 7pm

Giving Tree...Our “Giving Tree” is in the narthex waiting to be adorned with signs of our love and appreciation for our church. Different colored balls are placed on the tree based on different sized over and above gifts. Let’s decorate that tree to all of its full beauty so we can meet our ministry goals.

Toys for Children Tree...We have a beautiful Christmas Tree on the Chancel in the Sanctuary. We invite folks to bring a new unwrapped toy for a child in need. We can help make Christmas morning a special time for children who might not otherwise have anything. The deadline for bringing your toys and placing them under the tree is Sunday, December 17.

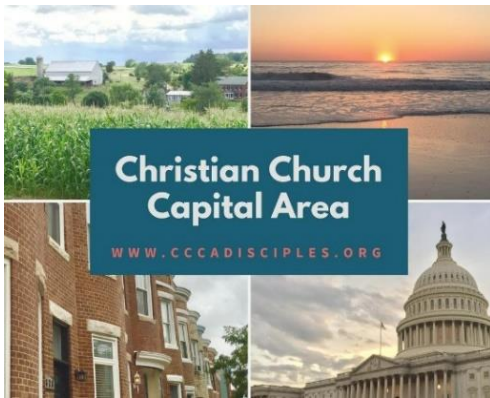
Help us re-stock our food pantry.



Items needed:

- Canned vegetables
- Canned fruit
- Soup
- Beans
- Juice boxes

Items may be dropped off in the wooden box outside the Fellowship Hall or bring them to the church office during office hours.



2023 Capital Area Prayer Calendar for This Month

Ephesians 6:18: And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the LORD's people. You are invited to participate in the Capital Area Prayer Calendar by offering a prayer each day for the listed congregation, institution, or event during the week listed. Please pray for their pastor/executive director, lay leaders, and the community(ies) they serve. Pray also for the missionaries serving the world through our Global Ministries.

For weekly prayers, go online to: http://www.globalministries.org/weekly_prayers [Note: The Capital Area has a special relationship with two missionary sites: China and Colombia] * Indicates a discrepancy b/w what is listed on the Global Ministries website and their printed calendar.

- 5 University Christian Church, Hyattsville, Maryland - <http://www.uccmd.org> Cindy Moraga, Mexico
- 12 Whosoever Will Christian Church, Beltsville, Maryland - <http://www.whosoeverwillcc.org/> Leda Zakarison, Lebanon
- 19 Wilson Blvd. Christian Church, Arlington, Virginia - <http://www.wilsonboulevardcc.org> Mark Knowles, Lesotho
- 26 The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Capital Area Region, your Regional Board, your Regional Minister, Staff, and Volunteers – www.CCCADisciples.org Sarah Driver, Egypt

It's a Special Year...Christmas Eve is on Christmas Sunday, December 24. We will have a wonderful Sunday morning Worship Service at 11:00 am. Then, later in the day we will return and share in our beautiful Christmas Eve Service with refreshments to follow.

Remember what Christmas is about and share the reason for the season on Sunday, December 24.



6.5-7-inch plants @ \$16.25 if ordered by December 12

Red__Pink__White_ Marble__

Amount paid_____

Deadline for ordering is *December 12*

We need to order early to guarantee we get what we want!

They sell out very fast. Please place your order today.

NAME_____

In Memory of_____

In Honor of_____

