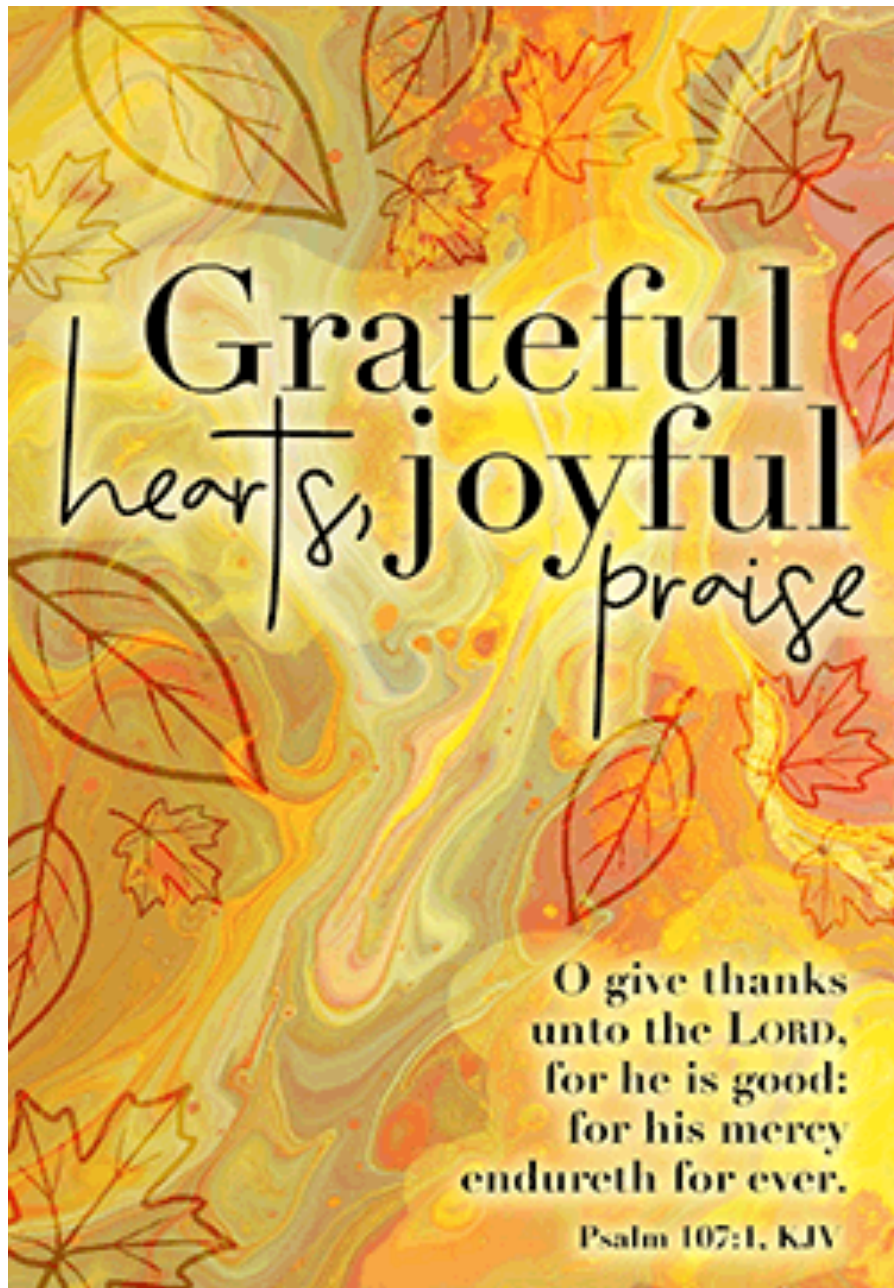




Church on the Cape Newsletter

January 2026



From The Pastor's Desk

The extraordinary in the ordinary!

The author of the Advent study we are using this year, Matthew Skinner, shares the realization that God often combines extraordinary actions with very ordinary ones. This is true in the story of the incarnation, the birth of Jesus, and God's entry into this world as a human being.

Every human being that has ever lived on this planet has been born of a human mother. That's the only way you can exist as a human being! Those of us who have had children or witnessed a birth realize that it is a profoundly miraculous experience, but it is also incredibly ordinary. It happens all the time. Sometimes it even happens when we don't necessarily want it to!

Humans have shared many stories of gods and goddesses appearing on earth. They have arrived in many forms and many ways, and often they are very extraordinary means or events. Yet, in the story of our God wanting to experience this world and be part of human life, God chooses the most ordinary of means, the one we all share, being born of a human mother.

God doesn't even choose a famous mother or a powerful family! It is true that Mary does become famous, but only because she was chosen and chose to accept God's call. When the angel Gabriel announced what God wanted her to do, she chose to say yes, to accept her destiny, and to participate in God's work. Again, though, God chose one of the most ordinary couples in the first-century world to be the parents of an extraordinary child. Then, as now, there were more poor people than rich, more everyday people than powerful people, and when God chose to come to us, God picked the ordinary ones to be the parents.

Even Jesus was remarkably ordinary. Most Christians are frustrated that there are no

Biblical stories of his childhood. After Luke tells about his presentation in the temple, the Gospels say nothing more until he is about 12 years old and frightens his parents by disappearing from the tour group they are part of. Even that story is not terribly remarkable when we discover all Jesus was doing was being a Torah-geek! Then Jesus returns to obscurity until Luke's gospel tells us he was around 30 years old. It is true that some early Christians could not tolerate such a lack of information and created fantastic tales of Jesus' early days, but these have been soundly dismissed as fantasy and not included in scripture. Jesus was so ordinary that almost nothing was remembered from his early days.

So it is that our God chooses the simplest, most basic, and most ordinary means by which to share the most extraordinary gift. God becomes normal. God is born. God grows up like every other human child. God chooses to be so down-to-earth that you can't tell Jesus from any other teenage boy.

It is finally, in his baptism, that Jesus' true identity is revealed. Even then, he is one of hundreds coming to John—an ordinary guy making a commitment of faith, and in that moment, the extraordinary breaks through and continues to grow.

Most of us are pretty ordinary people. Sure, you are all special and unique, but we are also very normal and everyday people. I can only wonder—what extraordinary work and experiences might God have in store for you and me? In what ordinary corner of our world might God be doing something extraordinary? In what small, seaside community, like Galilee or Cape Porpoise, might God's revelation be gestating, growing, and waiting to break forth into the world?

May God's extraordinary reality come to you in ordinary ways in this Christmas season and beyond!

Rev. Greg Smith

Scripture Readings for January Sundays



*Carolyn
Broad
Dec. 13, 2025*

JAN 04 | Epiphany Sunday

- Jer 31:7-14
- Ps 147:12-20 (UMH 859)
- Eph 1:3-14
- John 1:(1-9), 10-18

JAN 11 | Baptism of the Lord; Human Trafficking Awareness Day

- Isa 42:1-9
- Ps 29 (UMH 761)
- Acts 10:34-43
- Matt 3:13-17

JAN 18 | 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany; Human Relations Day

- Isa 49:1-7
- Ps 40:1-11 (UMH 774)
- 1 Cor 1:1-9
- John 1:29-42

JAN 25 | 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany; Ecumenical Sunday

- Isa 9:1-4
- Ps 27:1, 4-9 (UMH 758)
- 1 Cor 1:10-18
- Matt 4:12-23

With sadness and prayers, we share the news with you that Carolyn Broad passed away on Sunday, December 13. Please keep Carolyn's family in your prayers as they grieve. The memorial service will be held on February 7, at 11:00 AM here at Church on the Cape.

PRELUDE FAIR UPDATE

A big round of applause for all the worker bees, bakers, setup and take-down movers, and a special thank you to our money minders, Debora Berry and Marge Smith. From their hours of counting, we are excited to report total Fair Sales of \$10,435.77.

We also had a ton of fun along the way. 2025 Team Leaders: Susie Goodwin and Amy Hall.

CHRISTMAS SURPRISE PACKAGES

My sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who contributed their donations (new items and gift cards) towards the Christmas gifts for the surprise packages in 2025. As always, you made it a success with 168 packages sold out at noontime.

Thanks again, Debora M. Berry

TO OUR LOYAL COTC BAKERS

Thank you, once again, for your willingness to bake for our Christmas Fair. The variety of festive cookies for the 90 tins was outstanding! The baked goods table had jam, pies, breads, cakes, bars, cookies, and even gluten-free, sugar-free, and dairy-free goodies.

Kudos to all bakers and helpers for a very successful sale.

Gratefully, Joan, Debbie, and Linda

PS Don't forget to save your cookie tins to refill next year!



Article by Charlie Benore

Sometimes, when sleep is interrupted, I review the blessings God has given me, especially my family and the Church on the Cape.

I'm grateful, thankful, and blessed for everything that God does for me: especially the magnificent planet for our earth home, free will, the enormity of God's mercy, grace, and love, and an opportunity, for those like me who believe and work to follow his commandments, to join Him in heavenly bliss.

So blessed am I to have my family, to be an American, to live free in a beautiful town, to have my church family, and most importantly, to have Jesus as my savior.

Being editor of the church newsletter is another blessing. In a lay sense, it allows me to spread God's Word

anywhere online. I am also thankful for allowing repetition of "Why I Believe in God" in the newsletter from time to time. The four reasons are based on nearly 90 years of being a baptized Christian. It is my most fervent hope, and one I hope you share, that it will help non-believers respond positively and make the transition from 'no' or 'maybe' to 'YES.'

And I sincerely hope the newsletter's spiritual content helps each of you on your faith journeys.

In more detail, for Church on the Cape, I am especially thankful for our pastor, Greg, who shares his outstanding gifts of speaking, caroling, and storytelling, along with his preaching of God's Word, so that we can grow in our faith.

The Hymn Sing by Susie Goodwin is exceptional and allows us to praise God together. The Choir is marvelous. I admire its leadership by Paul Stephan and its superior performance.

And there are others, some seen and others unseen, who faithfully serve our wonderful church week after week, including Mike Kelly (by my count, now 251 online transmissions with only a couple of absences) and our ushers, Adrien Baracco (also our lay leader and church clock tender) and Jean Baracco.

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!!

The Church Fair Was a Big Success - \$10,435.77 AND A LOT OF FUN

As shown in the photos below, there were plenty of gifts for visitors to buy, and buy they did. Fair proceeds totaled \$10,436, which will help to pay for the costs of our wonderful church.

Getting the word out about the fair, gathering (even home pick-up if needed), and the beautiful display and marketing of the many donated items from our church family and others helped to make it a success. Many thanks to the donors, fair volunteers, and Amy Hall and Susie Goodwin, who managed the fair.

Several photos by Mike Kelly are shown below. For many more excellent photos by Mike, please go to the church website churchonthecape.org, and look for "Visit Our Prelude Christmas Fair Photo Gallery."



Everyone And Everything Was BEAUTIFUL At Our Pre-Christmas Service



Photos by Mike Kelly and Carol Nason

DECEMBER SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

The excitement of Christmas and the birth of baby Jesus could be felt in both the sanctuary and Sunday School during the Advent season. The children enjoyed bringing an ornament to the Advent wreath in the sanctuary and talking about the importance of their ornament. They proudly helped Pastor Greg light the Advent candles and had fun singing the Advent candle song each week.



The Advent celebration continued in Sunday School. The children had their own Advent wreath and candles to light (battery-operated). Each week, the lessons reflected the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. Ask the children what the word Advent means; there's a good chance they can tell you. In week one, the children created paper Advent calendars to count down to Christmas Day and talked about the hope the baby Jesus would bring. In week two, they created animal ornaments as a reminder of the lesson of peace. Week three, they created scenes of joy from the dry desert. In week four, the last Sunday in Advent, they lit the final candle of love. They heard the story of the angel messenger who persuaded Joseph to marry Mary, who was pregnant with the Holy Child. Hmmm, there were a few questions around that! The children made angel ornaments to remind them of the angel's message of Jesus' birth, and love.

Each Sunday, the joy the children and teachers bring to the program is clearly felt by all. These children feel a sense of real connection to their classmates and their church family. Thank you for the love and interest you show in each of them.



Article and Photos by Carol Nason, Parent Approval Given

A PURPOSEFUL NEW YEAR



The man who goes into the new year without some priorities governing his life and without some principles guiding his behavior is prey to the tempting, unimportant, and destructive things in life.

The new year is an opportunity to sort out the useless tasks and plan for the important; to review the failures and resolve to be successful; to take an inventory of causes and pledge life to purpose and service. These being done, the new will truly be new, different, and better.

— C. Neil Strait

Scripture Keys to a Joyful New Year

Hold fast to your faith (Hebrews 4:14)

Assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25)

Pray earnestly every day (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18)

Pray for great blessings (Malachi 3:10)

Yield not to temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Neglect not your talents and opportunities (Galatians 6:10)

Examine yourself daily (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Work diligently for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Yield your members to righteousness (Romans 6:11,16)

Exercise yourself in godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)

Aim at sinless perfection (Hebrews 6:1)

Redeem the time (Ephesians 5:15, 16)

— Gus Nichols

Church on the Cape

A United Methodist Church

We of The Church on the Cape represent various religious and cultural backgrounds and lifestyles. We are young, old, middle-aged, single, married, widowed, divorced, parents, grandparents, and members of extended families.

Above all, we are people who take risks, make mistakes, confess, repent, and try again.

At the center of our community is Jesus Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection are the reasons we are together. The life and hope in this community have more to do with Christ's faithfulness to us than ours to Christ.

Whether you are searching for a faith community or just passing through, we want you to feel at home. Whoever you are, whatever your history, your scars, your gifts; You are among people like yourself.

Join us from wherever you call home. If you like what you see here, we post our virtual Hymn Sing and Sunday Worship Service on our website, www.churchonthecape.org.

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