



# The Beacon

**February 2025**

*The Newsletter of Duncan Memorial United Methodist Church  
Our Mission: "To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ and Share His Love"*

There's a story in the Bible that has always fascinated me. For just under forty years the Israelites had been wandering the wilderness in search of the promised land. They had been guided safely from slavery in Egypt, they had won battles against foreign adversaries, and had even been provided quail and manna when the people were hungry. Now, finally the people stood on the precipice of Canaan, the promised land. Moses sends spies out to get a lay of the land.

The part that intrigues me is that when the spies return it is almost as if they had seen two different places. Joshua and Caleb report the good news that the land is indeed flowing with milk and honey as had been promised. They proclaim that the Israelites should go and claim the land as promised. The other spies however disagreed. While they did not refute claims of milk and honey, all they could see were the challenges ahead. "The people are giants, we are like grasshoppers to them" they complained. Despite all that God had already done for them, they wanted to turn around. One group saw the promise before them, while the other group saw the difficulties.

As you hopefully know, Duncan Memorial is in the middle of a visioning process. Currently members of our visioning team are in the data collecting phase, listening to members of the congregation and community to help determine what lies ahead. When this data is completed, like the spies of Israel, we will come together to report our findings to cast our vision. The question for us as a church is how will we receive it? Will we focus on the challenges before us, dwindling attendance, financial struggles, needed repair to infrastructure? Or will we see the promise and opportunity that lays before us? As a people of faith, I hope we will be able to see the hope that is before us, and remember the provisions of a God who has always been with us. What do you see?

Pastor Daniel



## *Scriptures and Sermon Titles for February*

### **February 2nd - Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

**Luke 4: 21-30**

*Me First!*

### **February 9th -Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**

**Luke 5: 1-11**

*Try Again*

### **February 16th - Sixth Sunday after Epiphany**

**Jeremiah 17:5-10**

*Rooted in Love*

### **February 23th - Seventh Sunday after Epiphany**

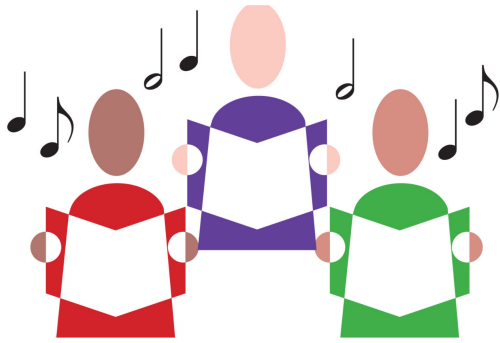
*Guest Preacher-Rev. Heather Wray*

## Valentines for Kids

Valentine's Day isn't just for schoolchildren and sweethearts. Loving parents should strive to give their children these life-changing gifts during February and beyond.

- **Acceptance:** Say and show that you love children for who they are. Give this gift with a kiss.
- **Self-confidence:** Help boost kids' trust in themselves. Give this gift with a hug.
- **Peace:** Model how to give your worries to God. Offer this present with laughter.
- **Gratitude:** Help children be genuinely thankful for each new day and for all of life. Give this gift as they go out the door.
- **Faith:** Introduce children to Jesus, the best friend they'll ever have. Do this by taking them to church and Sunday school regularly.





## Music Moment

*By John Hudson*

Civilla Martin, a writer born in Nova Scotia, visited Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle, Christian friends, in 1905. Mr. Doolittle was an incurable paraplegic who had to propel himself to and from a business in a wheel chair. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for over twenty years. Mrs. Martin was curious if her friends ever got discouraged by never being able to exist like other people.

Mrs. Doolittle responded, "Mrs. Martin, how can I be discouraged when my heavenly Father watches over each little sparrow and I know He loves me and cares for me".

Mrs. Martin, inspired by her friend's strong faith and cheery hopefulness, completed writing the verses within minutes after her visit - a song that has since been a source of great encouragement to many Christians. Charles Gabriel composed *His Eye is on the Sparrow* in 1906.

It is interesting that our Lord chose the most common of all birds - the sparrow - to teach a profound truth - **In God's eyes, no one is insignificant; He is vitally concerned with even the smallest details of our lives.**

*Matthew 10:29 - 31 - Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So DON'T BE AFRAID; you are worth more than many sparrows.*

The chorus is always there to lift us up in down times and remind us that He watches over all of us:

I sing because I'm happy;  
I sing because I'm free.  
For His eye is on the sparrow  
and I know He watches me.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I write in order to give an update from our latest Finance Meeting. Even in the aftermath of Covid and disaffiliations, yearly giving has been consistent over the past few years. I give you thanks for your faithfulness in Christ through your prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. Nonetheless, in the name of transparency, the finance committee would like the congregation to be aware of the financial situation of Duncan Memorial.

The Finance committee after difficult discussion and careful consideration decided we would not be able to pay the remainder of our 2024 conference and district apportionments. While we were able to pay \$39,860, the remaining unpaid balance amounted to around \$20,000. We lament that we were unable to meet these commitments that help continue the ministry of the United Methodist Church in Virginia and throughout the world.

We arrived at this decision because while we were able to meet operational expenses for 2024, some of these expenses were supplemented from restricted funds. At Duncan Memorial, we are blessed with many wonderful endowments and restricted gifts, however relying on these gifts to continually supplement general budget expenses will quickly deplete the reserves we have.

We were also blessed with a few generous gifts to the general fund at the end of the year that helped us to meet our operational expenses. While we hope gifts of these sorts will continue, these are not gifts that we should take for granted each year.

With all of these factors, the Finance Committee did not believe it would be prudent to pay near \$20,000 towards 2024 as we begin 2025. We have committed to paying our apportionments monthly for 2025, with the ability to more fully review the state of our 2025 finances after the first quarter and make any changes as necessary.

The purpose of this letter is not to scare the congregation about the state of our finances, but rather to be fully transparent and to explain the rationale of decisions made by our finance committee. I hope if you take anything away from this letter, it is that the gifts you give are used carefully and purposefully. I am personally thankful to the members of our Finance committee that help us to continue to carry out our ministries and who work tirelessly so that we will be able to do such for years to come.

I would also invite members of the congregation to review their level of giving. Please consider if you are able to raise your giving, or to become more consistent in your giving. The church has so much to offer including our Worship, studies and fellowship as well as the countless missions of the church such as Wee Angels, Food Pantry, Backpack buddies, scouts and more. These important ministries are only possible through your gifts.

Thank you again for the honor of being able to serve as your Pastor here at Duncan Memorial. This is a special congregation and I am excited for our future together.

Blessings,  
Rev. Daniel Wray

# February Birthdays

- Feb. 5 Shirley Hardesty
- Feb. 7 Judy Melton
- Feb. 8 Pam Burton
- Jonathan Walker
- Feb. 11 Barbara Mitchell
- Feb. 14 Jacqueline Fath
- Feb. 16 Barbara McWilliams
- Feb. 19 Douglas Kennedy
- Feb. 20 Wes Drosselmeyer
- Casey Kennedy
- Nicholas Neises
- Feb. 21 Nathaneal White
- Feb. 25 Lillian Ferreira
- Feb. 27 Claire Luzzi
- Kaia Meyer



The next combined Duncan Methodist Women and United Methodist Men's Breakfast will be Sat., February 1st at 9:00 AM.

Join the United Methodist Men on Tuesday, March 4th from 6:00 to 8:00 PM for our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner. All are invited for Dinner and Christian Fellowship. Shrove Tuesday is celebrated the day before Ash Wednesday. Shrove, derived from shrive, refers to confession of sins as a preparation for Lent. It's a time for examination and introspection.



## “Time”

Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear, too long for those who grieve, too short for those who rejoice. But for those who love, time is eternity.

— Henry Van Dyke

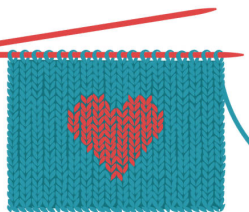
?? ? **Bible Quiz** ? ??

Fill in the blanks for three qualities Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13, attributes to love: “Love is \_\_\_\_\_; love is \_\_\_\_\_, ... it keeps no record of \_\_\_\_\_.”

- A. challenging, important, the past
- B. childlike, innocent, injustice
- C. self-sacrificing, generous, finances
- D. patient, kind, wrongs

## Comfort Cart

Through the generosity of the congregation, the youth have been sponsoring the Comfort Cart for several years now. It gets rolled out each month for the community meal and those who are less fortunate than ourselves can take items from the cart free of charge and without judgment. We try to have a variety of cleaning supplies, paper goods and health and beauty items for people to choose from. Many of these things cannot be toilet paper, lotion and paper towels. Thank you for helping us help other people.



## Blankets from the Heart

The ladies of Blankets from the Heart would like to invite anyone who crochets or knits, wants to learn how to crochet or knit, or

just wants to sit and talk with some really nice people who crochet or knit, to come to the parlor on Monday mornings from 10-12:00. It doesn't matter your skill level. We think all blankets are beautiful! We have the yarn, some hooks and needles, and comfy chairs and couches. The blankets we make go to children who are baptized here, Wee Angels, the Winchester hospital's NICU, Froggy's Closet, and other places where sick, lonely, grieving, hurt children can be found. Come make a difference in a child's life, learn a new skill, and have fun doing it!



Remember our Ash  
Wednesday service is  
on Wednesday, March  
5th at  
7:00 p.m.





Our Website:  
[www.dnumc.org](http://www.dnumc.org)



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Duncan Memorial United Methodist Church  
210 E. Main Street, Berryville, VA 22611

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage Paid  
Permit No. 3017  
Berryville, VA 22611

Address Service Requested

## Our Leadership & Staff

**Pastor-Rev. Daniel Wray**

**Administrative Assistant  
Janet Moore**

**Directors of Programs for  
Children/Youth  
Frank & Stephanie Moore**

**Director of Music  
John Hudson**

**Audio Visual  
Claire Luzzi**

**Sexton-Fiona Glynn**

**Nursery Attendant  
Lee Campbell**

**Administrative Council  
Chairperson-Glen Hetzel**

**Lay Leader-Chris Shipe**

**Nurture  
Sheryl Reid  
Cindy Morin**

**Outreach & Missions  
Shelia Stephens  
Worship  
Mildred Keating  
John Hudson**

**Congregational Care Team  
Cheyanne Fowler-Leader  
Sheryl Reid-Leader  
Trudy Gheen  
Beverly Goode  
Barbara Lawson  
Ellen Wilcox**

**Wee Angels Daycare**

**Administrator  
Lauren Hawkins Bucher**

## Love Makes Us Worthy

Unlike God, who loves unconditionally, humans often make choices and set limits when doling out affection. But Thomas Merton reminds us, “Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy. That is not our business and, in fact, it is nobody’s business. What we are asked to do is to love, and this love itself will render both ourselves and our neighbors worthy.”