

**PURPOSE**  
**STATEMENT**

*"We are disciples of Jesus Christ committed to making a difference in the community and in the world through service and invitational outreach."*



# The Messenger

First United Methodist Church, Chatham

From the Pastor

December 2024—Vol. 28—Issue 12

## A FOND FAREWELL

Dear Chatham Friends,

After much prayer and deliberation, I have decided that it is time to retire from part-time ministry.

I took my first pastoral assignment in 1962, a small church in Harrisburg, PA, just beyond the farm show buildings. From that time on, I have had a variety of churches and assignments from Alaska to Puerto Rico and in every corner of the world.

The United Methodist Church has taken me from Australia to the Middle East and throughout Europe. It has been a long and wonderful ride.

FUMC Chatham has now been my longest pastoral appointment, a total of 15-1/2 years! You have been not just a church, but a family. There have been literally hundreds of weddings and funerals, and I have come to know some of the most beautiful spirits right here in Chatham.

Here I have found talent and community spirit beyond belief! I will treasure each of you and some of our departed saints forever in my heart.

As you know, I have

spent the last two summers in the hospital and recovery facilities. Your cards, prayers, and calls have kept my spirit alive through open heart surgeries, amputations and related complexities. Thank you for your love and compassion!

Throughout these years, I, like many, have struggled with every aspect of my faith and all of its intricacies. While I may not affirm all of the mythologies of Christ and his life, I have continued because I strongly affirm His teachings and principles. His message of love, forgiveness and compassion for every human soul are as much needed now as ever in our world.

I also strongly believe these teachings are well reflected in the affirmations of our founding father, John Wesley. I commend these to you as I say farewell, fondly and with a thankful heart.

Pastor Thom



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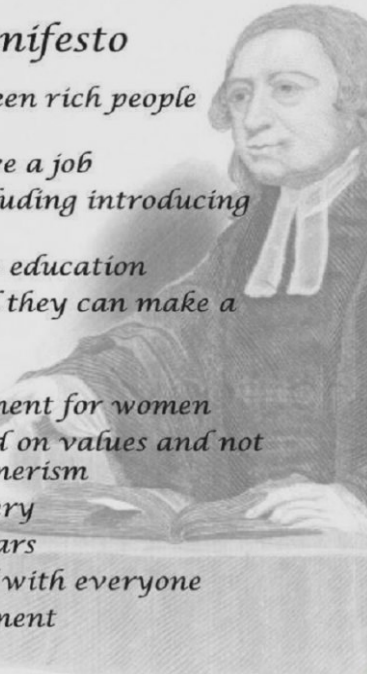
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## John Wesley's Manifesto

1. Reduce the gap between rich people and poor people
2. Help everyone to have a job
3. Help the poorest, including introducing a living wage
4. Offer the best possible education
5. Help everyone to feel they can make a difference
6. Promote tolerance
7. Promote equal treatment for women
8. Create a society based on values and not on profits and consumerism
9. End all forms of slavery
10. Avoid getting into wars
11. Share the love of God with everyone
12. Care for the environment



I found the following in *The 1619 Project*, created by Nikole Hannah-Jones & *The New York Times Magazine*, pp. 268-270, that dovetails item 9 of John Wesley's (Updated) Manifesto (ed.)

“March 16, 1870. A month after being sworn in, Mississippi Senator Hiram Rhodes Revels, the first Black member of either house of Congress in U.S. history, gives his first speech on the floor of the Senate. His comments address a debate on whether Congress should force the Georgia state legislature to accept twenty-nine Black state representatives and three Black state senators who had recently been elected but were being denied their seats.

“[Below] is a found poem derived from the text of Revels' historic speech.

“Like to the Rushing of a Mighty Wind”  
by Tracy K. Smith

“I rise. I rise, lifting my voice. My term is short, fraught, and I bear about me daily the keenest sense of the power of blacks to shed hallowed light, to welcome the Good News.

“Weary of bondage, sorrow, adjudication delayed, they wait and they wait. The feelings which animate them are, by God's law, natural, logical. Alone, my own race acts in interrogation:

“Would the country believe its borders wide enough for all truly loyal men to find within them peace? And be that loyal man black, will his pursuit of liberty and happiness find feuds and contentions, death and disaster, the very air dark as an ugly dream? Many of my race sleep in the countless graves of the South. If our dead could speak, what a voice, like to the rushing of a mighty wind, would come up from the ground.

“Her whole people, white and colored, should race to each other wholly and with honor, meet and fit for admission of events transpired. Now, sir. Sir, now. I wish my last word upon the bill before us to be: “Now.”

### SERVING IN THE MILITARY

The following members of the military are associated with our church:

- Lt. Forrest A. Bogue, U.S. Navy, San Diego, CA, son of Amy Bogue & Forrest Bogue, and grandson of Olive Bogue.
- Petty Officer 3rd Class, USN, Noah Firmin, son of Mike and Anita Firmin, who is stationed in Yokosuka, Japan.
- Pvt. Jacob Stewart, grandson of Elaine & Roger Trexler, stationed at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia.



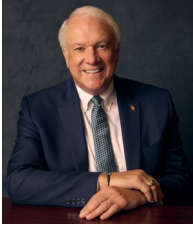
**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**  
12-02—Dona Connor  
12-25—Miles Farber

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY**  
12-01—Kim & Peter Farber  
12-06—Jay & Claire Thompson

### DECEMBER 2024 VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

- Dec. 01 Greeter and Usher— Ruth Norman**  
**Elevator Operator—Deb Smith**  
**Liturgist—Karen Goggins**  
**Coffee Hour Hosts— Mike Firmin and Kim Smith**
- Dec. 08 Greeter and Usher—Jay Thompson**  
**Elevator Operator—Myron Kellberg**  
**Liturgist—Keith Bradley**  
**POT LUCK LUNCHEON**
- Dec. 15 Greeter and Usher— Diane Kennedy**  
**Elevator Operator— Mike Firmin**  
**Liturgist—Jan Lovewell**  
**Coffee Hour Hosts— Marilyn Johnson and Ginger Murray**
- Dec. 22 Greeter and Usher—Mike Firmin**  
**Elevator Operator—Deb Smith**  
**Liturgist—Robin Rank**  
**Coffee Hour Hosts— Suzanna Nickerson and Tom Sharkey**
- Dec. 29 Greeter and Usher—Myron Kellberg**  
**Elevator Operator—Mike Firmin**  
**Liturgist—Jay Thompson**  
**Coffee Hour Hosts— Barb Nickerson and Phyllis Power**

If you have a conflict, please feel free to change with someone else and/or let the office know.



Nov. 6, 2024

## Reflections on the Day After (by Resident Bishop Bickerton)

On the days before the election, I stated publicly that no matter who was elected, there would be deep feelings and raw emotions expressed.

On this day after the election, it's true. Today is a somber, sobering day for many. It is a day when there are few words to salve the wounds of some or to temper the strong feelings in others. Some feel defeated. Others feel emboldened. We are and will remain divided.

Today is a day to be careful with our words, gentle with one another, and sensitive to the vulnerable state in which we find ourselves. In the midst of all that needs to be sorted through, I write with special concern for many who feel diminished, lessened, and even frightened today: Women, especially women of color, who are deeply gifted and blessed with extraordinary leadership skills, yet often deemed not enough; immigrants who worry about their safety, their families, and their future; all people viewed as "other" in this fractured political environment, leaders who have taken a different path who, today, worry about retribution. The list is long.

Today is a day to be careful with one another, sensitive to raw feelings and personal pain in our midst, and prayerful that somehow, some way, there may be a day when we will pursue unity rather than division, when grace rather than retaliation will be the driving force, and love, not hatred, will be the standard.

Today is a day to be careful with one another because there is someone today who is afraid and in pain.

But tomorrow is a day to begin again the work of creating a just world for everyone, working tirelessly to eliminate racism and gender bias that seeks to diminish the gifts of many, creating a pathway of hope for those who have none, and navigating a channel of love that will make the world a better place for our children, our grandchildren, and, in fact, everyone wherever they are in the world.

Today it's okay to be reflective and somber. But staying that way will only feed those who hope to keep us down. Tomorrow it's time to let the presence of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit guide our steps and inform our words going forward.

Today the General Board of Church and Society posted this prayer written by Rev. Allison Mark and Bishop Julius Trimble. It is titled, "A Prayer for our Country after Election Day."

*Spirit of the living God, guide us in the way of peace,  
keep us on the path of justice, and the way of love for the whole of the human family.  
We pray for those who weep today as our elections reveal winners and losers.  
Our hope for a more inclusive and unified country remains our prayer, and that the Gospel and the church bring healing and help to those in most need. Amen.*

At the Council of Bishops meeting today, a chorus quietly emerged as a part of our worship. It was the old Bill Withers's song, *Lean on Me*:

*Sometimes in our lives  
We all have pain  
We all have sorrow  
But if we are wise  
We know that there's always tomorrow.  
Lean on me  
When you're not strong  
And I'll be your friend  
I'll help you carry on ...  
May it be so. Oh Lord, our God, may it be so.*

*Thomas Bickerton*







Pastor Wesley Silva of Eastham and Orleans UMCs, recently sent his digital newsletter, which contained the following that fits right into Stewardship season. So, with his permission, it is reprinted here.

### **Hope for the Future**

“Today, we turn to a powerful message of hope from Jeremiah 29:11, a verse often quoted and beloved: ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’ To fully understand this promise, let’s step into the shoes of those who first heard it—the Israelites living as exiles in Babylon. They had lost their homes, their Temple, and perhaps even their sense of purpose. Yet, in this context of displacement and despair, God speaks through Jeremiah to remind them that even in foreign lands, they still have a future and a hope.

“This message is as vital for us today as it was for them. As we reflect on hope and our responsibility to God’s future, we’ll explore what it means to practice ‘hopeful stewardship.’ Stewardship, after all, isn’t just about managing what we have today but investing in something greater—leaving a legacy for future generations.

### **Historical Context: A People in Exile**

“When Jeremiah wrote this letter, Judah had been conquered, and many of its people were living as captives in Babylon. Surrounded by foreign customs and strange gods, they longed to return to Jerusalem. But God’s message through Jeremiah was not about an immediate rescue; it was a call to invest in their present circumstances and trust God’s plan. They were instructed to build homes, plant gardens, and seek the prosperity of the city they found themselves in.

“This context speaks to the essence of stewardship: sometimes, we’re called to care for and nurture things that will bless not only us but those who come after us. Jeremiah’s words remind us that our actions today are not just for our own benefit but to create a foundation of faith and hope for future generations. Stewardship is about patience, persistence, and faith in God’s long-term plans. God’s message was clear: ‘I have a plan for you.’ Even though the exiles would spend seventy years in Babylon—a lifetime for most—God promised a future restoration. This promise is a call to hope and to believe that our current hardships or sacrifices are not the end of the story. The Israelites were to invest in a future they might not personally see but would benefit their children and grandchildren.

“This is what hopeful stewardship looks like. Like the exiles, we are caretakers not just for today’s resources and blessings but for the legacy we’ll leave behind. When we steward wisely and faithfully, we are saying ‘yes’ to God’s promises not just for ourselves but for those who will follow us.

### **Hopeful Stewardship and Our Future Legacy**

“God’s call to the Israelites to settle, invest, and seek the peace and prosperity of their surroundings points us to an essential truth: stewardship is not just about the present—it’s about investing in the future. We are called to be caretakers of God’s creation, His church, and His gifts. The work we do today shapes what will be passed on to the generations who come after us. Hopeful stewardship asks us to look beyond the here and  
(cont’d. on p. 5)

**POT LUCK LUNCHEONS: TO THOSE WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN TO BRING SOMETHING FOR POT LUCK SUNDAYS, THE 2ND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH—IT IS MORE THAN OKAY TO COME. “WE SPECIALIZE IN LOAVES AND FISHES.”**

### **FAMILY FOOD PANTRY AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, CHATHAM**

**Our mission at First United Methodist Church, Chatham, is to provide comprehensive food assistance to those in need of support and to encourage long-term support if needed. NO OUTDATED FOOD SHOULD BE DONATED. Monetary contributions are also welcome—send a check to the church office (put FUMC Food Pantry on the memo line), mail it to First United Methodist Church, 16 Cross Street, Chatham, MA 02633, or put it in the Sunday offering. Hours of Pantry Operation, which is located in our Thrift Shop, are Wed. thru Sat., 11—2. For information, please contact Pastor Sonny—508.241.4982.**

now. It challenges us to manage our resources in ways that honor God and ensure they will continue to bless others. Every act of giving, every moment spent in service, and every effort to care for our community can be part of lasting impact.

### The Parable of the Talents

“In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus shares the parable of the talents, where a master entrusts his servants with resources and expects them to use them wisely. When he returns, he rewards those who invested well, saying, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.’ But to the one who buried his talent, fearing loss, he brings judgment, highlighting the importance of actively growing and investing what we’ve been given.

“This parable aligns perfectly with Jeremiah 29’s message to the exiles. It’s a call to make the most of what we have today—not simply to preserve it but to multiply it. Just as the servants were entrusted with talents, we, too, are entrusted with resources, gifts, and opportunities. Hopeful stewardship means using them in ways that will bless future generations, even if we don’t see the full fruits of our labor ourselves.

“Application: How Can We Practice hopeful Stewardship? As we think about God’s plans for a hopeful future, let’s consider what it means to invest in that future here and now.

1. Manage Resources Wisely: Are we using our time, talents, and finances in ways that honor God and support His mission? Let’s seek ways to ensure our resources serve both present and future needs.

2. Invest in People: Like the Israelites who were called to build community even in exile, we’re called to build each other up. Mentorship, teaching, and sharing our faith can all leave a lasting impact that goes beyond our lifetime.

3. Support the Church: Our church is a place where faith can flourish for generations. Supporting its ministries, caring for its facilities, and helping it grow are all ways we can build a legacy that honors God.

4. Embrace Patience and Trust: God’s plans may unfold over time, often beyond what we can see. Like the exiles, we’re called to trust God’s timing and to believe that He is working through our stewardship.

### Conclusion

“Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us that even in times of uncertainty, God’s plans are ‘to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’ Today, as we reflect on God’s promise and what it means for our own stewardship, may we be encouraged to look beyond the immediate and to live in a way that leaves something greater behind. Just as the exiles were invited to be part of God’s long-term vision, so are we.

“Let’s ask ourselves: How can we invest today in ways that bless tomorrow? Let’s embrace hopeful stewardship, creating a legacy of faith, generosity, and hope for generations to come. Amen.”



**Christmas  
is a  
Birthday**



**BLESSING THAT KNOWS YOUR NAME:  
CHANCES ARE  
THERE WILL COME A DAY  
WHEN YOU WILL FORGET  
EVERY LAST WORD  
OF THIS BLESSING.  
IT DOES NOT MATTER.  
LET THIS BLESSING  
SLIP THROUGH  
YOUR FINGERS.  
LET IT ROLL FROM  
THE SMOOTH PLANE  
OF YOUR PALM  
LET EACH LINE  
DISAPPEAR  
AND EVERY SYLLABLE  
FALL AWAY.  
LET THIS BLESSING  
RETURN  
TO WHERE ALL  
BLESSINGS BEGIN.  
LET IT LEAVE YOU  
UNTIL ALL THAT REMAINS  
IS THE PLACE WHERE IT PIERCED YOU—  
WHETHER LIKE FIRE  
OR LIKE BREATH  
YOU COULD NOT SAY,  
ONLY THAT YOU HEARD  
YOUR NAME AS IT ENTERED,  
THEN HEARD ITS OWN  
AS IT BLEW AWAY.**

**BY JAN RICHARDSON**

Poinsettia Order Form



*We're not trying to rush to Christmas, but due to the demands of growers, we must order poinsettia soon. Please return this form as soon as possible if you would like to have poinsettia in the Sanctuary for Christmas Sunday, December 22, and/or donate to the church's Mission Committee in honor or remembrance of loved ones.*

*You may attach a check to this order form, made payable to First United Methodist Church, and mail it to the church office, 16 Cross Street, Chatham, MA 02633, or place it in the offering plate. Please mark the memo area of your check "Poinsettia" and/or "Missions." The cost this year is **\$15.00 per 6-1/2" plant**. Your choice of colors is as follows. Please put the number of plants you want in the blank next to the color:*

*Beauty Princess (cream and pink) \_\_\_\_\_*

*Burgundy \_\_\_\_\_*

*Glitter (red and white) \_\_\_\_\_*

*Marble (red and cream) \_\_\_\_\_*

*Picasso (pink and cream) \_\_\_\_\_*

*Pink \_\_\_\_\_*

*Red \_\_\_\_\_*

*White \_\_\_\_\_*

*Winter Rose (red) \_\_\_\_\_*

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone no. or email \_\_\_\_\_

No. of 6" plants \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for Poinsettia     \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for Missions

Check included in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## DECEMBER 2024 CHURCH CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 7pm AA Group meeting in the Heberton Room.	<b>3</b> 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 10:30—Noon Faith Study in Peace Room (by the offices)	<b>4</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	<b>5</b> 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise 9:30am— Meditation Group 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	<b>6</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	<b>7</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open
<b>8</b> 10am Worship/ Communion and Pledge Sunday <b>POT LUCK LUNCHEON—If you forgot to bring something, join us anyway—we specialize in loaves and fishes</b>	<b>9</b> 7pm AA Group meeting in the Heberton Room.	<b>10</b> 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 10:30—Noon Faith Study in Peace Room (by the offices) <b>JANUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b>	<b>11</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	<b>12</b> 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise in 9:30am— Meditation Group 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open 5:30—Finance and Trustees	<b>13</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	<b>14</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open
<b>15</b> 10am—Worship	<b>16</b> 7pm AA Group meeting in the Heberton Room.	<b>17</b> 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 10:30—Noon Faith Study in Peace Room (by the offices)	<b>18</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	<b>19</b> 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise 9:30am— Meditation Group 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	<b>20</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	<b>21</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open
<b>22</b> 10am Worship	<b>23</b> <b>THE OFFICE IS CLOSED THIS WEEK</b> 7pm AA Group meeting in the Heberton Room.	<b>24</b> <b>4PM CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE</b>	<b>25</b> <b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>	<b>26</b> 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise 9:30am— Meditation Group 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	<b>27</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	<b>28</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open
<b>29</b> 10am Worship	<b>30</b> 7pm AA Group meeting in the Heberton Room.	<b>31</b> <b>FIRST NIGHT ACTIVITIES</b>				



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