

REFLECTIONS

a Quarterly Newsletter of

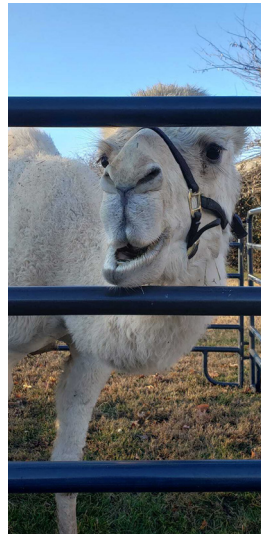


Southern Hills
united methodist church



Spring 2023

Top: (L) Rev. Joan Wooden directs M.O.V.E. (Men Only Vocal Ensemble) at our 2022 Festival of Christmas concert. (R) Live camels were part of the festivities at our Epiphany celebration on December 31st.
Middle: (L) Stephen Sizemore, Jr., enjoys a snack after the children's Christmas musical. (R) Oliver Nichols and Lillian Sizemore portray Joseph and Mary in the children's Christmas musical. **Bottom:** (L) TJ Nichols, Emily and Anne Beck, and Tori Brown pause to smile during Christmas festivities. R) Rosemary Souleyrette and the ladies of LOVE (Ladies Only Vocal Ensemble) showcase their talents at the Festival of Christmas concert.



Senior Pastor's Note

I'm a huge fan of the CS Lewis series *The Chronicles of Narnia*. I didn't read the books until I was in college, but since, I have read them a dozen times. I love the simplicity of the stories. I love the mystery they invite me into. I love that the characters are flawed, yet willing participants in stories of redemption and rescue. And, of course, I absolutely love the character of Aslan.

Aslan is a "Christ figure" in the books, and he is portrayed as a huge lion. And when Aslan confronts or engages with a son of Adam or daughter of Eve (that's what humans are called), his presence always fills people with a sense of awe. Some are afraid of him. Some want to run away or see him as menacing. But most of the inhabitants of Narnia know him to be mighty and powerful and full of ultimate goodness.

Upon learning that Aslan is a lion, one of the characters in the story asks if he is safe, and the response still makes my heart skip a bit every time I hear or read it. "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you." In every one of the Narnian stories, it is the goodness of Aslan that compels him to rescue and ransom those who ask for it. He is the one who sang Narnia into existence and gave it everything it would need, but no matter how bleak things look, he never gives up on this world that repeatedly chooses to act in ways that are often cruel and hurtful to others.

There is a lot happening in our world, nation, state, and city – a lot that feels cruel and hurtful. Our denomination is facing an unprecedented exodus and shuffling. There are gashes in creation itself – earthquakes and winter storms and droughts. There are gashes in our psyches and souls. Uncertainty seems to be the common theme behind what so many of us are feeling. And that uncertainty is creating a space where we can't deal with all the emotions of fear, sadness, anxiety, and depression. Just this morning, I was reminiscing about the last trip I took to Israel, three years ago, and the person I was talking to said, "That was a different world." Three years ago, we didn't know a global pandemic would change everything. We hadn't conceived of masks and efforts to flatten curves. No one would have thought we would need lessons on how to wash our hands. No one could even imagine the uncertainty that would be our "new normal." And yet, with all this uncertainty and with such a radically different world, I think we have reason to hope.

Throughout history, God seems to do big things when creation is groaning. When uncertainty is ravaging and fear is throwing its sharpest daggers, God finds a way to be on the move. It's in these moments that God's Spirit has a new way to get our attention. It's in these moments that we need a reminder that Jesus' promise to never leave and never forsake us still holds fast. It's in these moments that the Church of Jesus has the opportunity to repent, return, and be renewed. Whenever Aslan is needed by the people of Narnia, a whisper begins to circulate, and a promise is remembered – Aslan is always on the move. Our God is not surprised with our uncertainty nor our fear in the midst of it. Our God is still a refuge and a strong rock. Our God is still making ways when there seems to be no way. Our God is still showing up in the worship and lives of those who seek. Our God is still on the move.

Beloved, as we enter the Lenten season, as our denomination continues to wrestle, as our world seems bent on its own self-destruction, take heart and hear these words of hope. God's not done with us yet, and the Kingdom that we, as Jesus' followers, are living for is breaking forth all around us. Be on the lookout. Be watchful. Let's focus on Jesus and see what rescue is on the horizon.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Jim



Backpack Ministry Update

Backpack Ministry continues with our mission of serving families who experience food insecurity by providing food to five of our area schools on a regular basis. We provide snack and pantry food items for Ashland, Maxwell, Millcreek, and Picadome.

Each month we pack food bags for Arlington Elementary. Students at Arlington take food bags home weekly; each bag contains eight food items for the students to have on the weekends.

Our packings take place in the Activities Building in the large room near the gymnasium. We start at 10:00 a.m. and are almost always finished by 11:00 a.m. Then some of our volunteers transport the bags to Arlington.

Here are the packing dates for the rest of the school year:

Thursday, March 2

Thursday, April 13

Thursday, May 4

As always, the Backpack Ministry is in need of your financial contributions. Our congregation has always been very generous, and we count on your faithfulness so that this ministry can continue to meet the great needs of our community.

Of course, we welcome anyone who is interested to come and join us when we pack! There is a place for everyone, and we guarantee a joyful time! To be added to our volunteer list, please email sarahhhicks@aol.com.

United Women in Faith

Meet Meade Shotwell Circle

We are a small group for women that operates within the United Women in Faith organization of the church. We meet virtually by Zoom on the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Zoom allows us the flexibility to gather regardless of where we might be physically or any weather issues that might arise. Our meetings focus on prayer and planning but also extending friendship and support to one another. We engage in mission opportunities within Southern Hills, supporting our children and youth, and community outreach through organizations including Common Good, The Nest, Books for Children, and the Kentucky United Methodist Children's Home. We also provide our local elementary school children with books and school supplies. All women of the church are welcome to join us. Contact Lynn Osborne for details at Lynn.D.Osborne@gmail.com or 859-231-7241.

Save the Date!

May 3rd, 5:30-7:00 p.m. in Herren Hall! Southern Hills United Women in Faith will gather to celebrate. Watch for details in the Friday E-News as we get closer to the date!

Joan Wooden, Director of Music and Worship

Singing a New Song?

This year's Elementary Children's Choir has been incredibly surprising! Did you know that we have twenty-four children on our rolls, but only seven of them have family affiliations with Southern Hills? They are delightful children, but you won't see most of them in our worship services when the choir sings on Sunday mornings. In fact, I'm not even certain that many of them have a church home.

A few weeks ago, I asked one young girl where she goes to church. "Here!" she replied, "This is my church home!" Hmmmmmm... Now that's some food for thought! Then, on Sunday evening, I had a parent tell me that she wants to be on my email distribution list because she heard that I teach "singing" and even some "music theory." (I would use that last term quite loosely!!) She said that she wants her child to sing when he can, even though they are "very busy." I found myself agreeing to that arrangement, knowing full well that it doesn't work from a "performance" perspective. *Who are we "performing" for, anyway? One another? God? And what does God do with such an offering?* My answer to that last question came later that evening when the children and I went into the sanctuary to practice. They obediently, but very enthusiastically, walked down the aisle, playing their rhythm sticks and singing (some of them to the top of their lungs; others less so). They were amazed at Dr. James playing the organ, and a good time was had by all! After rehearsal, I felt reenergized and really, really good! I get it! It is was God!!! GOD blessed ME by allowing me to hear those precious children sing! So this year's Children's Choir does not look like it has for the past 12 years, but God is using our new children and their new song! God's song!

Join Chancel Choir for Lent and Easter

If you have been thinking about making a short-term commitment to our Chancel Choir, Lent is the perfect time to do so! Lent begins on February 22nd and culminates with our Easter services on April 9th. So instead of giving something up for Lent, *add* singing in our choir to your life for these forty days! You will be blessed to be a blessing! (For information on joining, please contact Joan Wooden or any choir member!)



Southern Hills UMC Foundation

a Vision + a Plan = a Legacy



A legacy is not a “highfalutin” term. A legacy is not related to wealth. Rather, it comes from taking action. Most people die without a will (over 60%). A legacy is simply making a plan, which most people do not.

You are already a part of the church, a witness for Jesus Christ as a powerful way of transforming lives. You can create your legacy by simply taking your vision and linking it to a simple plan. Your plan may be as straightforward as a gift to Southern Hills UMC in your will or estate plan.

What a wonderful way to say, “I believe in the ministry of the church and want it to continue beyond my lifetime for the next generation!”

The Permanent Endowment Committee here at church has additional information for you or your advisor about how the SHUMC Foundation administers legacy gifts. Call the Business Office for details or speak with a committee member.

**Where there is no vision...the people perish.
-Proverbs 29:18a**

Steven Stuckert, From the Business Office

Financial Condition

January was a good starting month for Southern Hills UMC. We show a positive net income of \$75,000. However, we did receive a payment of \$129,000 from The American Rescue Plan, which bolstered our net income. We plan on receiving \$600,000 total for the year under this program. Keep in mind we are fairly certain we will not be receiving these payments after this year. That factor will certainly be a large influence on our 2024-and-beyond budgets.

*Note: Through January is 9% of the year. Income and expense percentage over 9% is over budget.

Current Income / Expense January 31, 2023

Income	(in thousands)	% Budgeted
SHECP	294	8.9
Contributions	70	5.9
The Source	10	7
Other Income	3	0.3
Total Income	377	8
Expenses		
SHECP	149	4.7
Property	12	18.9
Personnel	74	6.7
Debt Retirement	8	8.3
Designated Funds	29	36.5
Administrative	9	7.7
Education & Worship	2	0.4
The Source	18	9.9
Leisure & Outreach	0.3	0.3
Ministry	1	1.3
Music	1	0.5
Total Expenses	302	7
Balance	75	

Faith Formation

From Kristina White, Director of Faith Formation:

We've certainly had a ministry-filled few months. We've celebrated the baptisms of three little ones. Each one reminded me of our commitment as a church body to support these children and their parents as they grow in their faith! What a responsibility and an honor!

During our Advent Conspiracy challenge, the Harrodsburg Road campus ended up supporting more families at Step By Step Ministries than any other church that partners with Step By Step. The executive director met with me recently and was absolutely astounded at the work they will be able to do with the moms and children because of the generosity of our congregation! We were also able to provide a meal during one of their training sessions. Drew and Melissa Perry; Elin Crabtree; my husband, Jason; and I were able to serve the families and spend time with the moms. I have loved seeing what God is doing at Step By Step! If providing a meal is something you would like to be a part of, please connect with me.

We're celebrating how God is working through our Emotionally Healthy Discipleship courses. We've just begun Emotionally Healthy Relationships. The tools we've already learned are making an impact in the lives of those who are a part of the course. We will be offering this course and the Emotionally Healthy Spirituality courses on a rotating basis. Please consider joining one of these in the future!



From Shawne Carter, Director of Children's Ministry at The Source:

On Saturday, February 11th, the Faith Formation team held our second Valentine's Kids Day Out at the Harrodsburg Road campus. This was an opportunity for us to provide parents with some time to themselves for a few hours in the afternoon (woo hoo!). We had 17 families participate, with a total of 32 children. Members of the Faith Formation team along with 7 of our youth played games, made Valentine crafts, and enjoyed time with the kids. It was a wonderful afternoon of intergenerational fun and fellowship. We want to thank all of the families who participated for their generosity, as we were able to raise \$350 for the Southern Hills youth and children's ministries. The afternoon brought to mind one of my favorite phrases, "blessed to be blessing." We were truly blessed.

From Sequoia Wheeler, Director of Children's Ministry at the Harrodsburg Road Campus:

We have been busy this season!

First, thank you so much for all the support the congregation has been giving to our children's ministry eat-out days. We hope to see that support continue into this year. Our goal is to have an eat-out event once a month. This not only allows us to support nearby businesses, but it also helps us raise money so that we continue to make improvements to our children's areas. We are also able to utilize the money for more outreach opportunities to bring in new families.

Second, a big thank you to all our families during Advent season at the 10:45 a.m. service at the Harrodsburg Road campus. We were able to make sure we had both children and adults serving throughout the Advent season as we waited to celebrate Jesus. It was such a joy to watch our children help celebrate the season.

Faith Formation

Finally, we switched it up this year, and in place of our Happy Birthday, Jesus, party, we had a churchwide Advent-ure party! It was such a joy to have children, youth, and adults gather for some Christmas fun. We had a hot cocoa bar, an ugly Christmas sweater contest, Christmas B.I.N.G.O., and a nativity scavenger hunt. It was a blast, and if you weren't able to join us last year, I hope you will consider joining us this coming year. It's an "Advent-ure" you do not want to miss!



From Tori Brown, Director of Youth Ministry:

Following Yonder "Star Words"

On December 31st, the youth ministry hosted our first ever Epiphany celebration with live camels! Like the Magi followed the star to find Jesus, Southern Hills offered youth, children, and adults "star words" to guide us as we follow Jesus this year. The star words we used were guided by the Holy Spirit, and each person randomly selected one. Participants were invited to accept the word they picked with an open heart to learn how the Spirit might be calling them to live into that word. My star word for the year was "cleansing." When I first read it, I wanted to throw it back. What was that supposed to mean? Cleansing made me think about intending to clean something thoroughly. These words were supposed to be a gift, but this did not feel like one to me. Yet, over these past few months, the word has continued to come back to my heart and mind. I started researching cleansing prayers and one day stumbled upon a cleansing prayer from John Wesley. That prayer has now become a spiritual discipline in my life. I'm not one for New Year's resolutions, because – let's be honest – they always seem to fail. Instead, my star word has become my practice for the new year. Instead of making a resolution that I'll feel guilty about breaking a week later, I take my star word as a gift and keep my eyes open. The star words have allowed me to see God in unexpected ways and places. They've been challenging, life-giving, and transformative. How is God working through your star word this year?

Cleanse My Heart by John Wesley

"O Saviour of the world, God of Gods, light of light, you who are the brightness of your Father's glory, the express image of his person; you who have destroyed the power of the devil, who have overcome death, "who sits at the right hand of the Father"; you will speedily come down in your Father's glory to judge all men according to their works. Be my light and my peace; destroy the power of the devil in me and make me a new creature. You who cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene, cast out of my heart all corrupt affections. You who raised Lazarus from the dead, raise me from the death of sin. You who cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, and gave sight to the blind, heal the diseases of my soul; open my eyes, and fix them singly on the prize of my high calling, and cleanse my heart from every desire but that of advancing your glory. Amen."

From Chelsey Clark for Young Adult Ministry:

The past few months with SHUMC's young adults have been a whirlwind! With December's Advent celebrations we experienced an expectancy of Jesus that we haven't felt before. We have also begun studying the Bible with a more supernatural lens for the spring semester. We were thrilled to help out with the youth group's nerf battle in January and are loving the community that we are fostering between the teens and the young adults. Easter, here we come!

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Top: (L) Elington Wells lights a candle to spread the light of Christ at the Children’s Choir’s Christmas musical. (M) Rev. LeTicia Precely preaches at the Harrodsburg Road campus. (R) The youth and young adults participate in a nerf battle in January. **Middle:** (L) Uniting Voices Chicago visits Southern Hills. (R) Backpack Ministry volunteers jump back into action after the holidays at our January pack. **Bottom:** (L) The Beck family celebrates baby Grace Noelle Beck’s baptism with Rev. Dr. Bill Moore. (R) Backpack ministry volunteers hard at work!



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Building true reflections of God's amazing love.

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southernhillsumc.org

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Harrodsburg Road Campus:

2356 Harrodsburg Road

Lexington, Kentucky 40503

Worship Services at 8:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Sundays.

Sunday school classes offered at 9:30 a.m.

The Source:

3330 Partner Place, Suite 130

Worship Services at 10:30 a.m. Sundays

Source Studies Sunday school classes offered at 9:15 a.m.