



# THE BEACON

Brookstown  
United Methodist Church  
Rev. James T. (Chip) Webb, Jr.  
**January 2026**



## **A Message from Pastor Chip** **Conjunction Junction: What's Your Function?**

*(Some Background Information from The Internet:*

*"The 'Great Conjunction' of Jupiter and Saturn is when these two largest planets appear closest in our sky, happening about every 20 years, as Jupiter "laps" Saturn in orbit. During this rare event, the planets look like a single bright 'star'; however, they are actually millions of miles apart.*

*The 'Great Conjunction of 2020' was an historically close and visible event, the best in nearly 800 years. It peaked on December 21, coinciding with the Winter Solstice. The next noticeable "Great Conjunction" happens in 2040, though not as close as 2020. The next truly close one will be in 2080.")*

***In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."***

***~ According to The Gospel of Matthew***

King Herod is not our favorite ruler of Judea, but he was the epitome of Roman power, wealth and engineering. Travel to the Holy Land today, and visit the remains of architectural wonders, many still functional, planned and built during the reign of Herod: the Temple Mount, Caesarea, and Masada. Herod was mighty, smart, and ruthless; but, nonetheless, Herod was the recipient of a message from the Almighty.

**LIGHT, PREPARATION, HOPE, and RESTORATION** – our Advent themes are grounded in the prophetic voices announcing God's shepherding acts on behalf of his people held in captivity, a Babylonian captivity that was physical and spiritual and theological. From the first chapters of the first book of our Bible, through our most quoted prophets, continuing to the climactic chapters of the last book of the New Testament, Babylon occupies a position antithetical and second only to the Kingdom of God.

And so, one day when King Herod was 'in the office' in Jerusalem – not at the beach in Caesarea or at his mountaintop desert resort at Masada – one of his staffers announced that he had visitors from the East. These visitors were smart, educated, and cultured, beneficiaries of a former world empire, people to whom Herod could relate.

The Gospel of Luke records angelic proclamations to shepherds abiding in the fields by night concerning a baby laid in a manger in a stable in tiny Bethlehem, but the Gospel of Matthew fulfills the messaging by sending emissaries to the representative of worldly power in Jerusalem. Luke records God 'going low' with the message; in Matthew, God goes high!

***"When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born."***

***~ According to Matthew***

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## **A Message from Pastor Chip**

*(continued)*

These wise men from the East, heirs to a pagan celestial worldview, showed up looking for an answer at the palace of the most powerful man in that part of the world. Unlike his visitors who were following a star, Herod believed Moses' account that God spoke light into existence and later created the sun, moon and the stars.

***"When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy." ~ According to Matthew***

Herod was plenty frightened. Overwhelmed with joy, the wise men believed that the star had sent them. Herod wondered: ***Who sent the star?***

### **Epiphany of the Lord**

Christians recognize Epiphany beginning on January 6, the 12<sup>th</sup> day after Christmas, through Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins.

Epiphany marks the coming of the Magi, or wise men, to worship the baby Jesus. Because they were Gentiles, Epiphany symbolizes the first recognition of Christ by non-Jews. It's a reminder that Christ came as the Light of the World, not just for the Jews, but for Gentiles as well. Christ's light is for all!

In the early church, January 6 was a day for baptism. In the modern church, Epiphany has become a time to focus on reaching out and "showing" Jesus as the Savior of all people.

The traditional color for Epiphany is green, indicating life, growth, hope and eternity. Symbols for the season include a light, candle, or star; a crown or three crowns; three gifts; and a globe.



### **New Beginnings**

*How fitting that the Epiphany season and the New Year coincide! Epiphany reveals a new King, the beginning of His ministry, His new disciples, His first healings, His "new teaching — with authority" (Mark 1:27).*

*We, too, experience newness, now and year-round. But newness can be tough. So we trust that God, who "makes all things new" while banishing "mourning and crying and pain" (Revelation 21:4-5), walks with us in this New Year — and always.*

### **Baptism of the Lord**

Theophany, The Baptism of the Lord (or the Baptism of Christ), is the day commemorating the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. It is celebrated on the first Sunday following The Epiphany of Our Lord. This year it falls on January 11.

*As the wise men followed the star to You, Jesus, may I follow Your Word and encounter You in my life. Amen.*

### **Special Offering: Human Relations Day**

*Sunday, January 18*

This special offering is collected the Sunday before the observance of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. These gifts support the Community Developers Program and community advocacy in the United States and Puerto Rico through United Methodist Voluntary Services. It also helps at-risk teens through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation program of the General Board of Church and Society.

*Let it snow*







# News from The Brookstown Express

*If they see God's love lived,  
they learn to live God's love.*

Dear Friends,

The children had a great time presenting their Christmas message during the 11:00 service December 21! Each child received a copy of the book our skit was based on, "The Crippled Lamb", by Max Lucado. These were given to them by their Brookstown Church Family. Our lesson from this Christmas story is: *The Greatest Gift is Jesus - He helps all who are believers - Each of us is crippled in some way - No one is perfect - Look with your heart to see what Jesus sees in us - Do what He would do by treating others with love and kindness - We must always reach out and love those who seem hardest to love - **We are all God's Children!***

Thanks to everyone who helped make this Christmas Season meaningful, and for allowing me to lead our children. Our Church Family is truly a blessing – old, young, and in between!

~ Marsha Campbell, Children's Ministry Coordinator

## Ski Trip!

Mark your calendars for our annual Ski Trip on February 22. It will be for all ages! More details will be shared soon.

~ Jonna Lasley,  
Youth Ministry Coordinator

*Kindness is like snow;  
it beautifies everything it covers.*

~ Kahlil Gibran

## Make a Natural Bird Feeder

### **What you need:**

- ❖ Several large pinecones
- ❖ Peanut butter
- ❖ Birdseed
- ❖ String, pipe cleaners or wire
- ❖ Scissors (if using string)
- ❖ Butter knife
- ❖ 2 or more plates
- ❖ A place to hang your bird feeder  
(a tree or bird feeder hanger work nicely)

### **What you do:**

- 1) Attach a pipe cleaner or string to the top of each pinecone to hang it by.
- 2) Use the butter knife to spread peanut butter all over the pinecone. Be sure to get it into all the cracks and crevices.
- 3) Pour birdseed onto a plate.
- 4) Roll the pinecone back and forth in the birdseed to completely cover it. Once it's covered, press the birdseed into the peanut butter and roll some more.
- 5) When your pinecone is completely covered in birdseed, take it outside and find the perfect place to hang it.
- 6) Have fun watching the birds enjoy their feast!



*Dear God, I leave the past year in Your keeping, and open my heart to  
the year to come, confident that You will journey constantly by my side. Amen.*



## United Women in Faith

For 2026, we have a new program resource book titled "Mapping Our Way Forward" that has programs we will be having each month at our meetings. It is about finding our way, mapping our plans, and holding on to that balance of grounding and flowing as we do it. Each month we will have a thematic reading about a Bible story, a group activity and discussion questions to share, and a closing prayer. Most months will have a specific tie-in to a United Women in Faith program or theme to help us learn more about the organization.

All women are invited to join us on Wednesday, January 21 at 11am for our monthly meeting in the fellowship hall. Bring a pot luck dish to share and enjoy with everyone. The program topic is "Light for Our Path." The mission of our organization is to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation leadership development, creative fellowship and education so that they can inspire, influence, and impact local and global communities. Come and join us! ~ Martha Isenberg, UWF President

*Jesus, show us what we must leave  
behind to follow You; show us what  
talents and tools to use in sharing  
Your good news with others.*

### 2026 Flower Chart

Placing flowers in our church services is a ministry that touches many people. It brings God's beauty to our worship services; it's also a special way for people to acknowledge loved ones and important dates in the lives of their families.

You can sign up on the 2026 flower chart in the narthex, or call Lavonda and she will add your name to the list.



### Lessons from a Snowman

- It's okay to wear white well after Labor Day.
- Simply hanging out in your front yard can be fun.
- Accessories don't have to be fancy or expensive.
- We're all made mostly of water.
- You know you've "arrived" when a song is written about you.
- So what if you're a little bottom-heavy?
  - Don't get too much sun.
- Sweating too much can be disastrous!

### Blood Drive

*Wednesday, January 7, 1:30-5:30pm*

Make plans to come out to Brookstown and give the gift of life by donating much-needed blood! The Red Cross will set up in the Fellowship Hall, and will take good care of you.

You can make an appointment by calling Tim Lasley at 336-817-4593, or sign up online:

[www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org)

Use Sponsor Code: Brookstown





# Grateful Hearts



*Things we might take for granted, someone else is praying for.*



*~ Marlan Rico Lee*



## The 2025 Giving Trees



Thank you, Brookstown, for your generous and giving spirit in helping provide many gifts during the Christmas Season. It was humbling to witness the stewardship of our congregation in response to the needs of others!

Our first Giving Tree this year collected health and hygiene items for Senior Services of Winston-Salem. Many older adults in our community find basic household essentials hard to come by due to limited finances and/or access to transportation. These items play a vital role in helping seniors remain safely in their homes. All the tags on this tree were taken the first Sunday it was available!

The second Giving Tree had tags that listed items needed by Hurricane Helene victims in the Minneapolis, NC communities. Non-perishable food and kitchen supplies, as well as grocery gift cards, were collected and taken to Minneapolis in December.

Then, there was a collection box for the Marines' "Toys for Tots" drive. Lots of great toys and surprises for children were donated to this cause by our generous Church Family.

And last, but not least, the Gideons International set up a "Birthday for Jesus" table and tree in the Fellowship Hall. This was a simple and fun way to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and helping the Gideons place God's Word across the globe. On the little Christmas tree, each donation envelope held a Gideon ornament for donors to hang on their Christmas trees in honor of Jesus' birthday.

Thank you for being the heart and hands of Christ, sharing love with our neighbors.

*"Christmas is forever, not for just one day; for loving, sharing, giving, can not be put away like bells and lights and tinsel, in some box upon a shelf. The good you do for others is good you do yourself." ~ Norman W. Brooks*

## Thanks to Everyone . . .

For the many roles carried out during the Advent season – doing chores, preparing, assisting, performing music, planning, shopping, decorating, cooking, feeding, recording, photographing, cleaning up, and the list goes on and on.

There were many special events at Brookstown this Christmas, and it took everyone to make it all happen. Thanks especially for the love and fellowship so generously shared with each other and with people outside our church walls.

### On Loving and Giving

*A clue as to how much a person loves is how much he or she gives in terms of time, talent, friendship, service, encouragement, and prayers on behalf of others.*



## Thank You!

Dear Brookstown Friends,

Thanks to everyone who made my Christmas extra-special with cards, visits, and surprises for me to find on my desk or office door, or delivered in person with a hug and a smile. I'm blessed by your thoughtfulness and love. Have a Happy and Blessed New Year!

Much love ~ Lavonda







# JANUARY



## Anniversaries

Graham & Kimberly Lewis 11

*If your birthday or anniversary needs to be added, please let me know.*  
Lavonda

## Flowers

**All Sundays  
in January are open**



Church Contact Information  
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Like us on Facebook

*Happy  
NEW YEAR!*

### **Crisis Control Gift of the Month:**

**Beef Stew  
Fruit Cups for Kids**

*There are bins at the church entrances  
for donations. Please help fill them  
for those who are in need.*



## Birthdays

|                 |    |
|-----------------|----|
| Aaron Saylor    | 1  |
| Leshia Bailiff  | 4  |
| Kelli Rush      | 4  |
| Wanda Needham   | 5  |
| Fay Manuel      | 8  |
| Tyler Steppe    | 10 |
| Kendra Allen    | 10 |
| Chelsea Douglas | 13 |
| Irene Stepto    | 14 |
| Emily Jameson   | 16 |
| Roberta Lasley  | 16 |
| Amanda Cleary   | 18 |
| Debbie Cofer    | 21 |
| Karen Procter   | 24 |
| Randy Hager     | 24 |
| Susan Harrell   | 24 |
| Jello Bannister | 25 |
| Alex Procter    | 26 |
| Karen Walters   | 27 |
| Kathy Prescott  | 27 |
| John Saylor     | 29 |
| Dale Rulon      | 30 |

## A New Year Poem

*Another fresh new year is here, another year to live!  
To banish worry, doubt, and fear; to love and laugh and give!*

*This bright new year is given me to live each day with zest;  
To daily grow and try to be my highest and my best!*

*I have the opportunity once more to right some wrongs,  
To pray for peace, to plant a tree, and sing more joyful songs!*

*~ William Arthur Ward*



*"Let our New Year's resolution be this: We will be there for one another  
as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word."*

*~ Goran Persson*



## *Another Year Is Dawning*

*Frances R. Havergal, 1874*

*(To the tune of "Lead On, O King Eternal")*

*Another year is dawning, dear Father, let it be,  
In working or in waiting, another year with Thee;  
Another year of progress, another year of praise,  
Another year of proving Thy presence all the days.*

*Another year of mercies, of faithfulness and grace,  
Another year of gladness in the shining of Thy face;  
Another year of leaning upon Thy loving breast;  
Another year of trusting, of quiet, happy rest.*

*Another year of service, of witness for Thy love,  
Another year of training for holier work above;  
Another year is dawning, dear Father, let it be  
On earth, or else in Heaven, another year for Thee.*

