



Love in Action

The Newsletter of Maggie Valley United Methodist Church

Volume 14, Issue 12

December, 2021

From Pastor Cole

Greetings from Maggie Valley UMC! I hope you are doing well — especially in light of the difficulties of the last almost two years.

This has been a difficult season, for individuals and churches alike. We've had to adapt to changing circumstances, which has made the way we worship and gather look different depending on the week... and change is hard.

Even still, there is a lot to celebrate. We have welcomed 11 new members to the church this year with 3 more ready to join. We have provided food to hundreds in need through our food ministries. We have reached out when tragedy struck our county with the August flood. We have had barn sales, hosted Vacation Bible School, had meaningful worship (indoors and in the barn!) and so much more.

All of this would not be possible without incredible support from you. If you are reading this letter, you are in some way connected to MVUMC and I am grateful. As our Baptismal Covenant states, through your "prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness," you have been faithful and that has made a *significant, real, and lasting* impact in the lives of others.

I write today to ask for your continued generosity. We have been financially blessed this year. We have continued to operate with a small surplus (comparing actual expenses to received gifts). This has been possible through many individual gifts and a large, one-time, unexpected gift.

As we look towards the end of 2021 and beginning 2022 on strong standing, please consider making a special financial contribution to Maggie Valley UMC. I pray and hope that life will settle into some sort of normalcy, and we will be even more active as a church. I believe we will have more fellowship opportunities, multi-church ministry gatherings, evangelism and outreach events and other ways of helping those in our community.

Reaching deeper into our community will not be possible if we do not meet the goal of our budget. Even though we are operating at a surplus this year, that is in part because we are spending less than budgeted. We plan to continue looking at ways to be responsible stewards of our finances, while being bold in our mission and ministry.

If you would like to send a gift, there a number of ways you can do so. You can write a check or send a cash donation in the envelope provided. You are welcome to visit maggieumc.org/donate and make a secure donation online. Or, my favorite option, join us in-person for worship at 10:30 each week and drop your donation in the offering plate then.

Thank you for any way you can help be God's hands and feet in the world through supporting MVUMC. The work is meaningful and producing fruit — so I praise God with you and for you. If there is any way I or MVUMC can be a gift to YOU, please don't hesitate to reach out!
May you be blessed with God's presence this season of Advent, Christmas and beyond.
—Grace & Peace, Pastor Cole



MAGGIE VALLEY UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH

Join us for a Family Friendly
**Christmas Eve
Service @ 5pm**

Join us for Christmas Eve as we hear the
story of Jesus' birth, light candles and sing
hymns. We hope to see you there!



Service & Missions, Announcements Update

Worship & Christmas Plans

Can you believe it is already December? For many of us, that means it's time to put up the Christmas tree, decorate the house, fill our homes with all the items that help us feel the importance of this time of year.

This **IS** a really important time of the year, but not just because of Christmas. It's important to slow down in the season of Advent that comes before December 25th. Advent can be a time where we make room in our hearts and lives for God's presence to re-visit us again.

I pray and hope you are making space in your life for this critical season. Your church is offering many ways to help you do this. As you prepare yourself for Christmas, join us for Sunday worship at 10:30 where we will sing hymns, light candles on the Advent wreath, hear the stories of those who prepared the way and so much more.

I especially want to invite you to join us for two special days: **December 19th and December 24th**. On December 19th we will have a service of "Lessons & Carols." During this service we will read the story of those who expectantly waited as we are, and the story of Jesus' birth! We will sing carols that help remind us what is important about this season, and there is always the chance to fellowship with those around you.

On December 24th, one of my favorite services of the year, we will have an important time of remembering what this season is all about. During this family friendly service, we will slow down to truly consider what God with us means in our lives today. We will end by singing "Silent Night" by candlelight. I hope you will join us! And be sure to pick up a flyer (or 2) from the church and invite a friend! The service will be less than an hour but can be a crucial moment of clarity in this hurried but wonderful season.

I hope to see you very soon!
— Grace & Peace, Pastor Cole



Our Church Food Pantry operates on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 am until noon. We are asking that everyone in the congregation **bring SHAMPOO/CONDITIONER and/or DISH SOAP this month.** Personal hygiene items are appreciated also. Thank you for helping!

It's time to sign up for the next Disciple Class! It will be open to all who have a desire to grow deeper in their faith through weekly study of the New Testament. No limit of participants, but we would like a head count to have workbooks ordered before the class begins. Completing Disciple Old Testament is not required.

Disciple Fast Track New Testament Wednesday, January 5-April 6, 2022,
Workbook cost \$15 Call church office 828.926.8036 or Pastor Mike 804.714.6319 **Deadline to order books is December 22, 2021.**

Winter begins Tuesday, December 21st.

Service & Missions, Announcements Update (continued)



December 11 | 10AM-4PM

Inside Maggie Valley UMC | 4192 Soco Rd. Maggie Valley

**Holiday
Boutique
& Bake Sale**

*New and Gently Used Men's & Women's
Clothing, Shoes, Handbags,
Jewelry and Unique Gifts*

Featuring local artist, Zeata Ruff

Proceeds support the food ministries of MVUMC

Celebrate the holiday season with us and help support a great cause.



From Bill Chamberlin, Treasurer's Report

Monthly Financial Report for November 2021

November		
Needed for Budget	\$	24,041.39
Expenses	\$	22,039.42
Offerings	\$	19,950.08
Over/Under	\$	(2,089.34)



**Treasurer
Report**

Service & Missions, Announcements Update (continued)

Just wanted to give you an update on this year's accomplishments of the Maggie Valley Community Gardens. For eight years, MVCG has grown, harvested, and delivered fresh, organic produce to charitable organizations throughout Haywood County. Our gardens are located at MVUMC (vegetable beds behind Cole's office and orchard and vineyard across the creek), the main vegetable garden on the grounds of First Baptist Church of Maggie Valley, and potato and bean patches at the Ernestine Upchurch family residence. This year, we harvested 1,851.5 lbs. of vegetables and fruit, an increase of 384 lbs. from 2020! Yellow squash, tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, and green beans were especially prolific. We experimented with a bed of sweet potatoes and the plants loved the sunny location, providing a yield of 81 lbs. Ernestine's potato patch netted nearly 400 lbs. of russet potatoes. We picked 186 lbs. of sweet grapes (102 lbs. of which were donated by Terry Clement). We delivered some of the grapes to Shepherd's Table, but the majority went to Broyhill Children's Home where they planned to make jelly. As usual, Meals on Wheels, MVUMC's Shepherd's Table and Food Pantry, the Open Door, McCracken Nursing Home, and Broyhill Children's Home received produce. With this year's disastrous flooding, we diverted some produce to New Covenant Church, Crestview Baptist Church, and the Cruso Community Center to help in their flood assistance efforts. Since the garden's inception, thousands of pounds of produce have helped feed the food insecure in Haywood County. Each year, we endeavor to improve our yields. We added another arching trellis to support more pole beans. With the knowledge of some of our Master Gardener volunteers, we experimented with new composting and mulching techniques, cover crops, companion planting, soil enhancements, and plant selections. Our efforts continue to pay off. In addition to growing produce, MVCG volunteers tend the pollinator flower beds at the orchard and at the Maggie Valley Post Office, host garden tours, distribute seed packets to local seed banks/libraries, and even maintain the Jonathan Creek information sign at MVUMC. We can't thank enough for the support from MVUMC; First Baptist Church of MV; the family of Ernestine Upchurch; Organic Beans, Subway, and Haywood Christian Ministries for their compost materials; Terry Clement (grapes); Colin Edwards for plowing the potato patch; and for all who donated plants and flowers. There is a great group of volunteers who make all this happen. Growing season typically starts around Mother's Day when the beds are readied for planting. As the vegetables grow, we water and pull weeds. When the vegetables are ripe, we harvest and deliver the produce to charities. Our volunteers appreciate the opportunity to give back to the community, share good times with other gardeners, and enjoy being outdoors in beautiful Maggie Valley. Follow the Maggie Valley Community Gardens on Facebook. If you're interested in becoming a volunteer, contact Barbara Planchock at 828-400-3144. We'd love to have you on the team.



Prayer Concerns

Our Kindred Spirits Prayer Group meets on Wednesdays at noon at MVUMC. Come to the Daisy classroom to join this group with your mask and please keep these in your prayers:

Donald Atkins	Kelly Aldridge	Bruce Arrow	Lovia & Tom Barefoot	Jim Bauden	Audrey Baxter
Jane Berrevoets	Robert Scott Blackadder	Eileen Bogo	Larry Bogo	Erma Bond	Greg Boyd
Hazel Bradshaw	Savannah Brigman	Wendell Burchfield	Jonathan Burr	Stockey Caldwell	Colton
Joe & Mari Conneen	Lance Conway	Jessica Cothorn	Teresa Crocker	Rev.Paul Davenport	Connie Dennis
Anita Desmond	Willard Dockery	Diana Duclos	Kirk Duclos	Earwood Family	Brian Bradley
Cory England	Clarissa Fisher	Vicky Flynn's Family	Carol Gardner	Dorothy Gardner	Bonnie & Larry Germaine
Brenda Griswold	Peyton Gully	Bud Hanselman	Grace Heger	Edith Highsmith	Michael Hill
Michael Hinebaugh	Carolyn Hobson	Jim Hunt	Holt Isom	Kim Itvere	Phyllis Jackson
Jimmy	Connie Jones	Bubba & Shirley Kelly	Gail Kevenk	Allen Kitchens	Jay Langford
Cheryl & Destiny Little	Lewis Lowder	Lynn Martin	Jack McElveen	Devoice Medford	Paul Mehaffey
Brenda Messer	Tom Miller	Ruby Moore	Sandra Morris	Jim Murtaugh	Jim Neely
Karen Neely	Lois Oehme	Michael O'Gorman	John Planchock	Norann Planchock	Pete Planchock
Pola	Sheila Price	Susan Purvis	Courtney Quick	Scott Reed	Angela Reid
Ginger Revis	Charlie & Mildred Rich	Mike Rickman	Rhonda Riley	Randy Rogers	Patricia Rowell's Family
John Saxton	Ron Sellers	Don & Wanda Shoemaker	Elizabeth Smallwood	Sarah Smart	Dustin Smith
Nan Smith	Annie Smith	Jane Spell	Carolyn Strickland	Betty Sutton	Sammy Sutton
Hilda Taylor	Kent Taylor	Kim Tilley	Sam Tiger	Pietro Tondini	Brian Toole
Martha Bradshaw Trull	Audrey Waters	Ted Watts	Aaron White	Tom Wynch	Janene Young
Gerry Robinson					

Please continue to pray for the following as well: Administrative Board, Bishop Carter, COVID 19 Pandemic, Disaster Victims, All Travelers, Our Choir, Haywood Street Congregation, Homeless People, Open Door, In God's Creation Hiking Group, Haywood Pathways Center, Manna

Foodbank & Publix, Men's Group, Missionaries, People looking for Work, Shepherd's Table, Sisters in Christ, Sonshine Recovery Ministries, United Methodist Church, World Events & Peace, Sunday School, Refugees, Food Pantry, Community Garden, Blue Ridge Health, Our Children & Youth, Schofields Ministries-MOM program, "Subject 2 Change" Christian Trio, District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Jae Lee, UMC Grace Circle, Van Ministry

Haywood County School Teachers and Students, College Students, Sunday School Teachers & Subs, Children's Church Workers and also including Bill Chamberlin, Shelly Coker, Anna Coleman, Eddie Ferguson, Clarissa Fisher, Beverly Ketner, Cameron Lail, Kristin Litchford, Jenny McPhaul, Renee Mackey, Wanda Messer, Annie Palmer, Barb, Danny & Megan Planchock, Gail Quick, Lynn & Mark Rains, Shafin & Taylor Ross, Mike & Sue Shirley, and Luke Williamson.

Emergency & Medical Workers, Missionaries & their families including Elizabeth Carmichael, Joe Conneen, Jeff Mackey & the MV Police Dept., Massey Family, Linda Palmer, Lynn & Mark Rains, Susan Snyder and Summer Conneen.

Our Country, Government, Service men, women & their families including Jesse Brestle, Amanda Bryson, Joshua Cruse, Andrew Davis, Clayton Hardy, Samuel Hunter, Ian Hutton, Mike & Sue Shirley, Luke Turner, Camille Tyler, Michael Woodard, 211th



Makenzie Moore, Zachary & Gabriella Moore, Michael Morris, Kane Pinkston, Joe Stroupe, Luke Turner, Camille Tyler, Michael Woodard, 211th Military Police Company, Prisoners of War, Veterans, Injured & MIA, Our Country, The President, and Our Leaders.

Those in Nursing Homes including Lou Baker, Shirley Mann → Haywood Lodge; Becky Bender, Jane Cable, Lady Hughes, Margaret Smith, Betty Sutton → Maggie Valley Nursing & Rehab; Gail Pace → Silver Bluff; Sue Shepherd → Smoky Mtn Nursing Home; Haywood Lodge, Maggie Valley Nursing Home, McCracken's Nursing Home, Silver Bluff Nursing Home, and Smoky Mountain Health & Rehab.

Those who are Homebound including Tom Bennett, Kathryn Brannen, Joseph Cullen, Wanda Deutsch, Willard Dockery, Helen & Joe Duke, Betty Ferguson, Nancy Lott Gerald, Tom & Vivian Gerard, Zelda Hanson, Bea Hawkins, Mary Beth Johnson, Paul Mehaffey, Hilda Palmer, The Pickens Family, Doug Ramsey, Ken Roach, Linda Rondecial, Maureen Shaw, Irene Sutton, Charlie & Rena Upright, Bill & Mary Ann Vignola, Terri Waddell, David & Donna Wagner and Aaron White.

Thank-you

Dear Belinda and Church family,

I hope and pray that this email finds you well I just Wanted To Tell Everyone that I'm So very Thankful for all of your hard Work, Time, Effort and Love in Action!! You All have No idea how much you have Put a Smile on My face!! And Joy in my heart ♡Please make Everyone Aware that They are Appreciated!! The Meals are Wonderful, and I want everyone who has a hand in Doing the meals.... You Make My day Every week!! I thank God for each and every One of You!!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Dave Pickens (November 16, 2021)

Proverbs 3:4-6

A Poem for Advent

God of new beginnings
 In this time
 Between the times
 of now, but not yet,
 Between conception and completion,
 Of promises half formed
 and dreams still emerging,
 Help us to let go
 Of all that holds us bound.
 Enable us to see clearly
 the light
 that beckons us forward
 Towards your love.
 Give us wisdom and patience
 for the journey
 Into the new life of your creation.



Christine Sine, Godspacelight.com

The Real Meaning of Christmas

T'was the night before Christmas and all through the town, Not a sign of Baby Jesus was anywhere to be found. The people were all busy with Christmas time chores, Like decorating and baking and shopping in stores. No one sang "Away in a Manager, No Crib for a Bed," Instead, they sang of Santa dressed up in bright red. Mama watched Martha Stewart, Pap drank a tap as hour upon hour the presents they'd wrap. When what from the TV did, they suddenly hear, 'Cept an ad which told of a big sale at Sears. So away to the mall they flew like a flash, buying things on credit and others with cash. As they made their way home from their trip to the mall, Did they think about Jesus oh no, not at all. Their lives were so busy with their Christmas time things, No time to remember Christ Jesus, the King. There were presents to wrap and cookies to bake,

How could they stop and remember who died for their sake. To pray to the Savior, they had no time to stop, Because they needed more time to "Shop 'till they dropped. "On Walmart! On Kmart! On Target! On Penney's! on Hallmark! On Zales! Then a quick lunch at Denny's. From the big stores downtown to the stores at the mall, They would dash away, dash away and visit them all. And up on the roof there rose such a clatter, as Grandpa hung icicle lights on his brand-new step ladder. He hung lights that would flash he hung lights that would twirl, Yet he never once prayed to Jesus, Light of the World. Christ's eyes, how they twinkle Christ's Spirit, how merry, Christ's love, how enormous all our burdens, He'll carry. So instead of being busy overworked and uptight, Let's put Christ back in CHRISTmas and enjoy some good nights.
 Merry CHRISTmas to all!

Birthdays & Anniversaries

HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

1	David Frank	20	Bea Hawkins
1	Amberly McNally	21	Mari Conneen
2	Natalie Roth	21	Christopher Nelson
5	Seth Rogers	21	Charles Rabjohns
5	Ben Yocom	22	Bob Wendel
8	Carol Schneider	23	Kenny Dotson
9	Diana Duclos	25	Ann Best
9	Susan Snyder	25	Cooper Lingelbach
12	Sandy Giles	26	Kayla Campbell
12	Steve Dickinson	26	Ann Watts
13	Penny Clouse	27	Natalie Hawkins
13	Herman Oellerich	27	Beverly Ketner
16	Beverly Truesdale	30	Pam Cherry
17	Justin Dotson	30	Joanne Lowder
18	Gene Johnson	31	William Messer
19	Carolyn Strickland	31	Jeff Williamson

HAPPY DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY!

7	SueWayne & Donald Adkins
12	Sharon & Darryl Ross
13	Stacey & Richard Boris (1980)
16	Joy & Don Bennett (1993)
19	Betty & Charles Rabjohns (2015)
21	Beverly & Mitch Truesdale (1974)
21	Charlotte & Jason Rogers
28	Janette & Ron Miller (1968)
28	Della & David Reeves





Beginning in 2022, we are going to update our Prayer List and we need your help. Please carefully look through the prayer list above and contact the office if there are additions, deletions, or edits that need to be made. We believe deeply in the power of prayer and want to make sure that we are keeping our list as current as possible. Please let us know as changes occur and needs arise so that we can surround you with our faith in prayer.

December

2021

November

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
28	29	30					

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28 Connections Sunday School (9am) — Worship (8:10:30)	29 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30)	30 Grief Group (1pm) — Grace Classroom	1 Open Door (9:30am) Food Pantry (10-12) Kindred Spirits Prayer Group (12-1) Disciple Bible Study (6:00pm)	2 Bible Study (10am) — Fellowship Hall UMW Grace Circle (2pm) — Fellowship Hall Charge Conference (6pm) — Zoom Only	3 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	4 AA (7pm) — Fellowship Hall
5 Connections Sunday School (9am) — Holy Communion & Worship (10:30)	6 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30)	7 Grief Group (1pm) — Grace Classroom	8 Food Pantry (10-12) Kindred Spirits Prayer Group (12-1) Disciple Bible Study (6:00pm)	9 Bible Study (10am) — Fellowship Hall	10 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	11 Christmas Boutique (10am-4pm) AA (7pm) — Fellowship Hall
12 Connections Sunday School (9am) — Grace Room Worship (10:30)	13 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30)	14 Grief Group (1pm) — Grace Classroom One Board Meeting (6pm) — Fellowship Hall	15 Delivering Lunch to Cruso (9am-2pm) Food Pantry (10-12) Bible Study (6:00pm)	16 Bible Study (10am) — Fellowship Hall Men's Group (5:30) — Daisy Room	17 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	18 AA (7pm) — Fellowship Hall
19 Connections Sunday School (9am) — Grace Room Worship - Lessons & Carols (10:30)	20 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30)	21 Grief Group (1pm) — Grace Classroom	22 Kindred Spirits Prayer Group (12-1)	23 Bible Study (10am) — Fellowship Hall	24 Christmas Eve Service (5pm)	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS! AA (7pm) — Fellowship Hall
26 Connections Sunday School (9am) — Grace Room Worship (10:30)	27 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30)	28 Grief Group (1pm) — Grace Classroom	29 Food Pantry (10-12) Kindred Spirits Prayer Group (12-1) Disciple Bible Study (6:00pm)	30 Bible Study (9am) — Fellowship Hall	31 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	1 HAPPY NEW YEAR! AA (7pm) — Fellowship Hall

From Beth Brown, Lay Leader

We are continuing our series from Chip Ingram's book, "Yes! You Really CAN Change. What to Do When You're Spiritually Stuck." Chip Ingram is a teaching pastor and CEO of Living on the Edge, an international teaching and discipleship ministry.

"One thing I ask from the Lord – the one thing I seek most – is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditation in his Temple." Psalm 27:4

Spiritual Isolation

A second reason many Christians don't change is spiritual isolation – a failure to be deeply engaged in Christ-centered, honest relationships. By God's design, transformation normally happens in the context of community. There are very few exceptions. We experience change when we participate in regular, loving, accountable relationships centered on God's Word.

This requires faith, courage, and discernment. Not all Christian communities are mature enough to handle transparency and the flows of their members without making judgments and creating false hierarchies of spirituality. Authenticity can be risky because grace is sometimes lacking in Christian relationships. But when you find brothers and sisters in Christ who are filled with grace, patience, and humility and who understand the importance of mutual accountability, I encourage you to take a step of faith to open up and grow together. God uses the gifts, knowledge, and experience of other believers to help us learn to trust Him. We overcome the issues in our lives because God gives grace through His Word, His Spirit, and His people. When we realize we are totally accepted – by God and other believers – we live out our faith by grace, the same way we were saved.

Creating the right environment for safe, authentic relationships is central to helping others mature spiritually. Parents can set up their children for life transformation by regular conversations and warm interactions that flow from reading Scripture together and modeling the importance of God's Word. These times can be brief, relational, and even lighthearted at times; you don't have to fill them with information or be able to answer all their questions. Bible storybooks, family devotionals, and private conversations can become treasured memories and have lifelong impact. Family is the most important small group God ever designed.

Most spiritual isolation is caused by a subtle form of pride – not the flagrant pride of an arrogant person but the kind of pride that elevates personal agendas and priorities about God's stated purposes for our lives. When my work, my time, and my goals squeeze God's Word and authentic spiritual relationships out of my schedule, I end up with shallow relationships, isolated from the transforming grace we receive when we serve and give of ourselves sacrificially. I know I've lived that life and, as a pastor for more than three decades, counseled countless others who have done the same. The pursuit of happiness through possessions, lifestyle, status or independence leaves us pretty unhappy. We miss out on God's means for transformation.

The world is filled with driven, talented people who have done that – who have reached the pinnacle of success and find themselves lonely, isolated, and depressed. They have missed out on meaningful relationships on their way to getting everything they thought they wanted, only to find out they really wanted meaningful relationships. Even if they accepted Christ and go to church, they usually haven't changed much. They haven't been able to enjoy the miracle of being a new creation.

It isn't just a good idea to have a few close friends with whom we can really share our hearts. Biblical, Christ-centered relationships are essential components of the Christian life. This is where most of our transformation occurs. The people who are too busy for those kinds of relationships end up being the "average" American Christians whose lives don't look much different from a nonbeliever's. They may be saved, but they aren't really experiencing their salvation. And they aren't becoming more and more like Jesus because they aren't walking with people who can model Christlikeness for them, hold them accountable and help them to grow.

The people who have had the greatest impact on me are those who have loved me enough to speak truth to me, even when it hurt. I'll never forget an early morning meeting at McDonald's with my mentor. He opened his Bible and read Proverbs 27:5-6; "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses." Then, with tears in his eyes, he pointed out a pattern of pride and arrogance that I was totally unaware of. It hurt deeply. I didn't like it. I mentally fought against it as it came out of his mouth, but the Holy Spirit spoke through him, and it was a major turning point in my life.

It isn't easy to hear a friend tell you that you're being arrogant or insensitive or too hard on your wife or kids. But that's love. That kind of accountability has spared me untold heartache. And it only happens in deep, honest, vulnerable relationships that take time and effort to develop. Being in some kind of growth group – a small group that studies the Bible and prays together, a ministry team, or an accountability group – is perhaps the most important thing you can do for your spiritual transformation. And it's the example Jesus gave us. He came to transform the world, and He didn't set up a classroom, write a book, develop a seminar, create an online course, or advertise a program. He started a small group of men and lived with them for three years. Others followed, many learned, but the core group that spent all their time with Him were transformed the most during those years. He lived with them, modeled life for them, shared God's Word with them, and walked with them through their doubts, questions, spiritual successes, and worst failures.

That's how I learned what the Christian life looks like. After college, I lived with the family of the man who disciplined me. I learned about marriage by watching him interact with his wife. I saw how he parented his children. I noticed how he served people. I watched him stop and help someone change a tire on a rainy day when the leaders of a Christian conference we had just attended all drove on by. He didn't just teach me truth; he exemplified it. It's often said that truth and faith are "more caught than taught," and it's true. We change in the context of relationships with people who teach, model and live truth together. As one mentor told me, "Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future."

"We will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church." Ephesians 4:15

Let us pray.

God our Father, we come to you as one body, to worship and praise you. You are full of mercy and grace and your love knows no bounds. Help us to share that love and grace with others to grow and strengthen our faith. Help us to nurture our relationships. Give us the courage to share struggles and joys with each other and to also listen and respond in a Christlike manner. Your way is our way – guide us in our day-to-day meetings with friends, family, and strangers. Amen

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Maggie Valley UMC Worship Services – 10:30 am

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Rev. Mike Shirley, Associate Pastor Cell (804) 714-6319

Jason Jones, Pianist & Choir Director

Janice Rogers, Organist

Belinda Marr, Administrative Assistant

"Knowing Christ, Growing Faith, Serving Others"

Maggie Valley United Methodist Church

"LOVE IN ACTION" Newsletter

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Maggie Valley, NC 28751

On the web at www.maggieumc.org



