



Hope

Peace

Joy

Love

DEC. 2024

**Lexington United
Methodist Church**

*Where We Seek, Serve and
Share Christ*

www.lexmoumc.org

Office: 660-259-2483

Rev. Andrew Sanders, Pastor
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Liz Johnson,
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Janet Thompson,
Music Director

Glenda Brooks,
Custodian

Sunday worship: 11 a.m.
Sunday School: 10 a.m.
Adult Sunday School: 10 a.m.
Youth Group, Sundays 6 p.m.

Worshiping Winds Rehearsal:
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.

Choir Rehearsal: Sundays, 10 a.m.

The Gift of Jesus

Merry Christmas, may peace fill your days this holiday season.

The grace of God is all around. Many of us can feel "the magic in the air," as some would say. The Spirit of the season fills us with joy and our children with wonder. With anticipation we all wait patiently.

With the winds of winter upon us a cool hush settles over our homes and the warmth inside increases with expectation of our savior's birth. I'm sure plans are underway as decorations adorn our homes and sanctuary.

Our Lord's plans are underway as well. Since the beginning, God our creator had a plan to have a relationship with humanity. For this reason our Heavenly Father created us. We were created in his image.

Humanity in the image of God is good,

however, humanity given free will falls short of the goodness in us. With our free will, humanity has chosen sin which separates us from God. Humanity is double minded. In one instance we can praise God and love our neighbor. In the very next instance we harm others by our words and deeds. We know there is brokenness in the world which brings darkness into homes and upon families.



Rev. Andrew Sanders

God felt humanity pull away; for this reason our Heavenly Father shined a brilliant light into the darkness and gave us Christ. Jesus our Savior born into the world.

Jesus brings us back into relationship with God and one another.

May this season be one of warmth and light as we celebrate our Savior born in our midst. A Savior that understands our brokenness and offers us wholeness. What a gift.

COOKED HAMBURGER MEAT STILL AVAILABLE: We still have cooked hamburger meat available for purchase. Packaged in 6 pound bags, they're \$21 and have been frozen. If you wish to purchase, please see Liz Johnson in the church office. They're in the freezer in the kitchen storage room. (The meat is left over from our Chili Supper.) They'd make a great big pot of chili for your holiday family gathering!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sundays: Worshiping Winds rehearsal 9:30 a.m. & Choir rehearsal 10 a.m.

Mondays: Quilters at 1 p.m.

Wednesdays: Exercise Group: 9 a.m.

BABY GRACE: First & Third Saturdays, 10 to Noon. Now in its new location next to the Nursery room.

HARVESTERS DISTRIBUTION: Second Monday of the month 8 to 11 a.m.

WOMEN'S GROUP: Friday, Dec. 13, Noon for carry-in lunch.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT: Sunday, Dec. 15, during the 11 a.m. service: "Candy Cane Christmas."

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING: Monday, Dec. 16, 6 p.m., Choir Room.

COMMODITIES: Monday, Dec. 23, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED: Tuesday, Dec. 24th and Wednesday, Dec. 25th for the Christmas holiday.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLIGHT SERVICE: Tuesday, Dec. 24th at 5 p.m., LUMC.

Church COUNCIL

Liz Johnson | Secretary

Ad Council met November 18 at 6 p.m.

Pastor Andrew offered prayer after chairman Phillip Davis opened the meeting.

Charge Conference church leaders for 2025 were announced and voted upon—so passed. Sarah Black, as lay leader, was voted upon for 2025 council chair—so passed.

The **October financials** were rough with quarterly taxes due, among other bills. The church had to borrow funds from the savings account to get through the month. However, we did receive a monetary gift that offset the monies bor-

rowed and November was a better month financially.

Pastor Andrew reported that **Youth Group** has begun meeting Sunday nights at 6 p.m. in **The Well** room. He now has three youth (junior high kids) participating. Kids from age 11 to 18 are welcome. Bring your friends!

Chili supper recap: profit this year was only about \$100 with less people coming into the church to vote on Election Day and partaking of the Chili Supper. A discussion ensued to rethink the chili supper for 2025 or whether to not continue with this fundraiser. We had a lot of volunteers to help out by cooking, cleaning, waiting tables and those who provided a bevy of desserts! The sense of community was outstanding. Please see **Steven Fuller's** "thank you" on the back page of this newsletter.

Roger McFadden reported that the leaks in the Family Life Center roof have been repaired with leaks over the sanctuary still being worked on. Many thanks to Roger, our trustee chair, for staying on top of the recent snow storm

HANDMADE KNITTED HATS FOR SALE

We have these colorful, handmade knitted hats for sale for \$10 apiece or a free will donation to benefit our new Youth Group. They will be available in the hallway by the sanctuary until sold out.

For Sale



Handmade, colorful knit hats in all sizes

\$10 Each
or Free Will Donation



Sundays *You're Invited!*
6 to 8 p.m.

In The Well

Lexington United
Methodist Church

Where we Seek, Serve and
Share Christ

1211 S. Business Hwy. 13,
Lexington
660-259-2483

Rev. Andrew Sanders, Pastor
lexmoumc.org

on November 30th and making sure the church sidewalks and parking lot were clear and safe.

CHILDREN'S PAGEANT: will take place during the 11 a.m. worship service Sunday, December 15th. Directed by **Bria Dobson** and **Jess Eaton**, the play is called "Candy Cane Christmas." Please reach out to Bria or Jess if your kids or grandkids are interested in participating.

A new **Advent small group study** has begun at 10 a.m., Sundays, facilitated by **Sarah Black**. It's based on Adam Hamilton's book, "Prepare the Way for the Lord."

Lauren Negrete reported that organization continues for the **Baby Grace** room. She requested to have new racks to hang on the walls, versus the racks that had previously been purchased. Roger said he would look into this. Lauren has four people on the Baby Grace board and is looking for one more.

The next meeting will be **Monday, December 16 at 6 p.m.**

Ernie Couch & Revival fills LUMC with gospel music

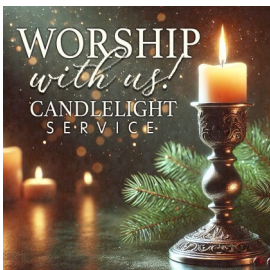


Ernie Couch & Revival returned to LUMC on November 10th to perform during our 11 a.m. Sunday worship time. They were outstanding performers who not only filled us with their gospel music renderings, but were entertaining as well. They will return in November 2025!

Advent began December 1st with Litany of Hope



The first Sunday in Advent began December 1st with Mary Kate Alkire reading the first Sunday's litany and prayers, the Light of Hope. Janet Cado lit the first Advent candle and the Christ candle during the readings. Each Sunday in Advent, we will present specific Advent readings and prayers along with special music as we journey through this time of preparation for the birth of Christ. Many thanks to all those who helped with decorating the church, inside and out. And many thanks to our readers, candlelighters, musicians and choir!



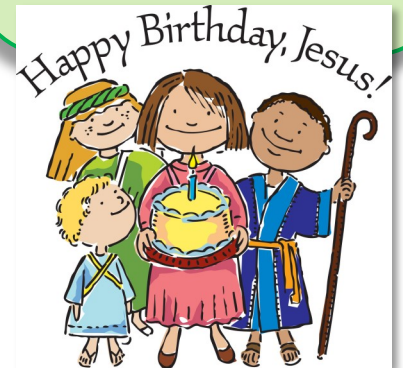
**JOIN US TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24TH
FOR OUR CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS
EVE SERVICE AT 5 P.M.**



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 12/2 Janet Cado
- 12/5 Mable Hawkins
- 12/8 Rick Vernon
- 12/15 Sarah Black
- 12/18 Sarah Stephenson
- 12/20 Roger McFadden
- 12/29 Russell Baker
- 12/30 James "Powers" Alder
- 12/31 Pam Johnson, Patty Sollars

Let Liz know in the office if we don't have your birthday!



Veterans service a touching tribute to our service men and women



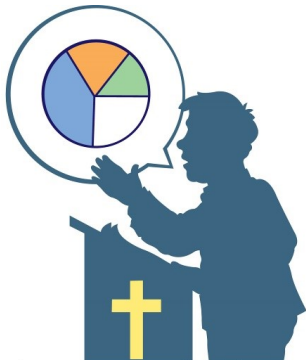
Our Veterans Remembrance service took place Sunday evening, Nov. 10th in a combined service with Pastors Julie and Andrew's churches. Rev. Julie Sanders gave a heartfelt and beautiful message while photos of our veterans ran on the board behind her. Pictured is our own Pastor Andrew while on active duty. The combined choirs of Waverly & LUMC sang "Song for the Unsung Hero" and the Scouts opened & closed the service with pomp and circumstance.

WORSHIP: Sundays 11 a.m.

**Sunday School: 10 a.m. Adult &
Children's Classes.**

**Choir Rehearsal: Sundays at 10 a.m.
Worshiping Winds Rehearsal: 9:30 a.m.**

ONLINE: lexmoumc.org



Treasurer's Report

November 2024

November Offering:	\$ 8,757.78
Reimbursements:	\$ 4,734.37
Less Expenses:	<u>-\$10,052.73</u>
Total	\$ 3,439.42
*Year-to-Date:	(6,836.42)

Figures are estimated until Treasurer closes out the month.

Teri James: Treasurer

Liz Johnson: Finance Secretary

Sharol McMullin: Finance Chair

Phillip Davis: 2024 Council Chair

Sarah Black: 2025 Council Chair

Pastor: Rev. Andrew Sanders

"Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor." ~ Proverbs 22:9



THANK YOU: *To my Church family I want to take this opportunity to thank each and everyone of you for all your help and participation in our chili supper. Unfortunately, we didn't have the sales that we wanted, but it was so very nice to see us all Come together for the good of the church. I'm so very proud of our church family and how we can pull together and do these projects. Again, thank each and everyone of you for all of your efforts. ~ Steven Fuller*

SUNDAY SCHOOL Teachers Needed



We are in need of two **CHILDREN'S Sunday School teachers** to take the rotation starting in January 2025. We can help with curriculum planning. Please join us and help in rebuilding our children's church. Candidates will need to be Safe Gatherings certified—a required certification for working with children and challenged adults. This is a free course. Please reach out to Liz Johnson for Safe Gatherings certification. Please reach out to Sarah Black, 660-232-2457, or Pastor Andrew, 417-770-6731, to inquire about teaching our children.

First Sunday of Advent, December 1, 2024

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16

Let your hopes, not your hurts, shape your future. —Robert H. Schuller

Advent has spawned many traditions over the centuries since the birth of Christ. These include setting up and decorating a Christmas tree, an exchange of gifts, putting together a nativity scene, serious baking of regional or cultural sweets, the singing of carols, keeping an Advent calendar and more.

One ritual that has a long history is the lighting of Advent candles. But the arrangement of the candles into a wreath is relatively recent. According to one source, Johann Wichern created the first Advent wreath in 1839. He took a decrepit cartwheel and fastened 20 red and four white candles on it. With 24 days leading up to Christmas Day, Wichern lit a new red candle on each weekday of December and a new white candle on each Sunday service, finally lighting the last white candle on Christmas Eve.

Thus started the tradition of the Advent wreath now observed by many churches today. The wreath today has four candles, usually purple (except for the third candle which is pink) and they stand for HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE. In the center of the wreath is a larger, white candle which is known as the CHRIST candle and it is lighted on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Today is the First Sunday of Advent, and the purple candle stands for HOPE. It is also known as the “prophecy candle” because it reminds us of the hope that God will fulfill the prophecies declared in the Old Testament about Jesus. It reminds us that in a world often clouded by uncertainty and darkness, this tiny flame serves as a beacon of light, illuminating our path and filling our hearts with anticipation.

Hope is not merely wishful thinking or blind optimism. It is a powerful force that sustains us in times of despair and guides us through the darkest of nights. It is the assurance that better days are ahead, even when the present seems bleak.

The first candle of Advent symbolizes this hope — a hope rooted in the promise of a Savior who brings light into the world. Just as this candle dispels the shadows around us, so, too, does Christ dispel the darkness of sin and despair, offering us a renewed sense of purpose and direction.

As we journey through this season of Advent, let us hold fast to the hope that Christ offers us. For in him, we find the promise of redemption, restoration and everlasting joy. Amen.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: O God, thank you for the hope that we have in Christ Jesus, the Savior of the world!
Amen.*



Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** 1 John 3-5
- Monday:** 2 John, 3 John, Jude
- Tuesday:** Revelation 1-3
- Wednesday:** Revelation 4-6
- Thursday:** Revelation 7-9
- Friday:** Revelation 10-12
- Saturday:** Psalms 139-141



MAY I HAVE A VOWEL PLEASE?

The answers to these clues all contain the vowel A and only A. There are no other vowels in the answers except A. Use the clues to fill in the blanks.

1. This man was Jacob’s grandfather, but the father of Ishmael (Genesis 18:1). _____
2. By the way, his wife sometimes laughed inappropriately (Genesis 18:12). _____
3. This little bird is both a color and species. Did it come from the Islands? _____
4. This word might signify a hat, canal, country or an isthmus. _____
5. A popular song a few years ago advised us: “Don’t worry, be (this).” _____
6. This is the country with the largest area in the Western Hemisphere. _____
7. Look in a dictionary under A. This animal is likely to be the first animal mentioned. _____
8. Mom said, “Go to the basement and get one of jelly, but don’t leave the door in this condition.” _____
9. A tree with compound leaves whose pliable but strong wood makes good canoe paddles, or basket splints. If you burn it up you will still have it. _____
10. To get results, a magician might say this. _____
11. The mountain where Noah’s Ark rested, according to Genesis 8:4. _____
12. This man in Numbers 22 had a talking donkey. _____
13. If you own one of these, you might own a motorcycle or a piano. _____
14. A U.S. state with eight letters. _____

Answers:
 1. Abraham,
 2. Sarah,
 3. canary,
 4. Panama,
 5. happy,
 6. Canada,
 7. aardvark,
 8. ajar, ajar,
 9. ash,
 10. abracadabra,
 11. Ararat,
 12. Balaam,
 13. Yamaha,
 14. Arkansas.



Second Sunday of Advent, December 8, 2024

Scripture Reading: Philippians 1:3-11

Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that. —Martin Luther King Jr.

Today, we light the candle of PEACE. The second candle of Advent reminds us that “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (John 1:5).

Have you ever experienced a blackout? You may have been caught unprepared. You couldn’t find your flashlight, or, if you did, the batteries were dead!

What could you do? Perhaps, you thought, I can find a candle and light it. So, you searched and searched. Do you know what you were doing as you searched?

You were resisting the darkness! This is what Christians are called to do. Advent, in a real sense, is a time of resistance. We don’t sit in the darkness and wring our hands, complaining about the darkness, bemoaning whatever happened to cause the darkness. No, we get up and light a light!

Today, people sit in darkness. This simple candle is a reminder that we care about our neighbors who suffer and that we stand in solidarity with them, resisting the dark forces of this world, and praying that “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).

After lighting this candle, you might recite the prayer attributed to Saint Francis:

*Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, harmony; Where there is error, truth;
Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light; And where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console; To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born into eternal life.*

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord, may I be an instrument of your peace. Amen.

Third Sunday of Advent, December 15, 2024

Scripture Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

*Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow;
it only saps today of its joy. — Leo Buscaglia*

It is surprising how often the Bible reminds us that *real joy is not possible without real suffering*.

In today's reading, we are told to "rejoice in the Lord always." Then, we are reminded to take our concerns to God in prayer and that the peace of God will "guard" our hearts. The apostle James tells us: "Consider it pure joy, ... whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:2-4, NIV).

In our journey of faith, we often encounter seasons of suffering and trials that test our resolve and challenge our faith. We get bad news from the doctor. We get bad news from our children about our grandchildren. We get bad news that a close friend has died. We have financial concerns that often depress us. And, of course, the political news is usually upsetting. As my German grandmother used to mutter, *Ach du Lieber* or *Gott im Himmel!*

These troubling moments of hardship and uncertainty can be overwhelming, causing us to question God's goodness and our own purpose in life. Yet, it is precisely in the midst of suffering that we have the opportunity to experience true joy — a joy that transcends our circumstances and is rooted in our relationship with God.

James 1:2-4 reminds us that we are called to consider it pure joy when we face trials of many kinds. This may seem counterintuitive — how can we possibly find joy in the midst of suffering?

True joy is not dependent on whether the ball bounced our way, or whether the sun is shining today. It is rather found in the unshakable hope and confidence that we have in God's promises. It comes from knowing that God is *with us* — Immanuel — in our suffering, working all things together for our good and his glory.

As we light the third candle of the Advent wreath, the candle of JOY, may we hold fast to the promise of God's faithfulness. May we find joy in the midst of our trials, knowing that our suffering is not in vain but is producing in us a resilience that will ultimately lead to maturity and completeness in Christ.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for the joy of your presence. In your name. Amen.

CHANGE ONE LETTER AND FIND THE CITY!

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Proverbs 15-18

Monday: Proverbs 19-21

Tuesday: Proverbs 22-24

Wednesday: Proverbs 25-28

Thursday: Proverbs 29-31

Friday: Ecclesiastes 1-3

Saturday: Ecclesiastes 4-6

Directions: For each of the three words below, change one letter to an **O** and then rearrange the letters to spell a major city of the world.

P U L S E

--	--	--	--	--

V I C A R

--	--	--	--	--

C H A I N

--	--	--	--	--

 **DECEMBER**

HIDDEN WORDS

Here are 10 words that can be rearranged to form another word. We've done the first one for you.

1. DECAL (laced)
2. WRONG
3. LIVED
4. LEMON
5. BURNT
6. THORN
7. LANCE
8. WASTE
9. MARCH
10. LEAST

Answers to Hidden Words (spelled backward): 2. nworj, 3. lived, 4. nolem, 5. tnurb, 6. htron, 7. naelc, 8. taews, 9. mrahc, 10. laets. **Answers to Change One Letter and Find the City!:** Seoul, Cairo, Hanoi.

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 22, 2024

Scripture Reading: Micah 5:2-5a

Don't obey God to get things; obey God to get God. —Tim Keller

Today, we light the fourth candle of Advent, the candle of LOVE. How does one go about loving God? It's difficult. Maybe, we think, God has put some sensitive souls on earth who become mystics, pastors, theologians, monks, nuns — and they can do all the spiritual heavy lifting for the rest of us.

These dear people don't seem to have any difficulty at all living in an emotional aura of love for God. That's okay, we say, "but it's not my cup of bliss."

Clearly, to love God is not to do any one specific thing for God. God really doesn't need anything done for him, thank you very much. The words of Jesus indicate that loving God is a state of being that encompasses the whole of our existence. We love God with our souls and hearts, that is, the intuitive persons we are, and with our mind and strength, that is, the rational, volitional creatures we are. Still,

- Some say they love God by going to church every Sunday.
- Some say they love God by not breaking the Ten Commandments.
- Some say they love God by reading the Bible every day.
- Some say they love God by praying to God at least once a week.
- Some say they love God by doing a good deed.
- Some say they love God by not swearing.

I don't see it this way. For me, *loving God is not work, but a walk.*

The prophet Micah provides the paradigm here. What does God ask of us? God asks us to walk with God (Micah 6:8).

There it is.

Jesus says we should love (read: walk with) God with our intuitive and rational selves. What happens on a pleasant walk with a friend? Sharing (intuitive) and good conversation (rational). A walk is an intimate experience. To walk with someone is to express solidarity and understanding. It is a mark of friendship and camaraderie. It is a sign of intimacy.

To love God is to walk with God.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: O God, may my love increase as I walk with you. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Ecclesiastes 7
- Monday:** Ecclesiastes 8
- Tuesday:** Ecclesiastes 9
- Wednesday:** Ecclesiastes 10
- Thursday:** Ecclesiastes 11
- Friday:** Ecclesiastes 12
- Saturday:** Song of Solomon 1-2

ZIG ZAG

Without lifting your pencil from the paper, move from square to square, vertically, horizontally or diagonally, to discover the longest possible name of a country from these letters.



FOURTH SUNDAY
OF
Advent

Z	E	D	N
W	T	R	A
I	S	L	P

ANSWERS: Zig Zag—Switzerland; Progressive Words—rants, runts, rusts; poker, power, mower, mowed

PROGRESSIVE WORDS

Can you get from the first word to the last by changing just one letter in each step?

PANTS

RUSTY

JOKER

ROWED

Sunday, December 29, 2024

Scripture Reading: Colossians 3:12-17

No matter how bad things are, you can always make things worse.

—Randy Pausch, The Last Lecture

Are you a “Tripper”? I am. Trippers are those people who can stumble over a fleck of dust. It doesn’t matter how minute the protrusion. If it’s there, I’ll trip over it.

God understands that we are “trippers.” It’s what we do. Maybe that’s why we’re called the “sheep” of God’s pasture. Sheep are not known for their agility or athletic ability. They’re rather clumsy animals. In fact, former Assistant Interior Secretary George Frampton, told a Senate subcommittee that “ovine ineptitude” kills 1,000 times more sheep in Montana than wolves. He describes the curious malady as “sheep who just fall over and can’t get up.”

The late President Ford was a famous Tripper. Arguably the fittest president in the history of our great country, he tripped over everything and anything. He fell off Air Force One, off the first tee at the Arlington Golf Course, down the stairs, up the stairs. He was the best.

Politicians seem to trip a lot. President Clinton’s leg and knee spent several weeks in a cast in 1997 as the result of a trip; Bob Dole, the late senator from Kansas, tripped off a platform and into the crowd on the campaign trail in 1996.

Actually, tripping happens to everyone. We trip over the merest rise in the pavement, objects in the bedroom, an uplifted corner of the rug, or a root in the ground.

Usually, we can recover when these mishaps occur. The arms go out for balance, we step quickly with the other foot and we land safely. We then take a quick, annoyed glance backward at what we tripped over, amazed that such an insignificant object could cause such a violent adjustment in our stride.

Trippers are those who seem to have inordinate difficulty in staying on their feet when confronted with even the slightest difficulty. Every obstacle, interruption or unforeseen event — however slight — becomes a major crisis. And if it is not a major crisis, the Tripper finds a way to turn it into one.

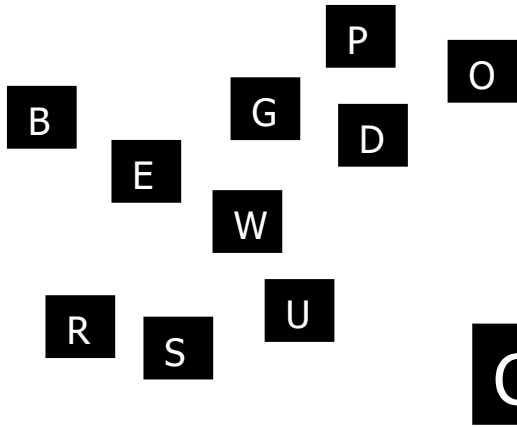
We will trip, however. What can we do when that happens? React immediately. Remove the obstacle. Move on. Let it go. Laugh. Don’t over-dramatize the experience. These are good suggestions to safeguard both our physical health as well as our spiritual health.

—Timothy Merrill, adapted from *Learning to Fall: a Guide for the Spiritually Clumsy*. Lulu.com, 2016, 61. Used by permission.

Prayer: O God, thank you for all the blessings I have enjoyed in 2024. Thank you for raising me up when I have tripped and stumbled. Lead me to safe paths in 2025. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

MAKE A WORD

Directions: Using four of the letters in the “pile” to the left, fill in the boxes below to make a seven-letter word that connects the grid.



A **N** **L**

T **O** **U**

W **E**

Good resolutions are ones that are measurable and realistic. What changes do you want to make starting this week?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Song of Solomon 3-4
- Monday:** Song of Solomon 5-6
- Tuesday:** Song of Solomon 7-8
- Wednesday:** Revelation 19

- Thursday:** Revelation 20
- Friday:** Revelation 21
- Saturday:** Revelation 22

Congratulations on reading the Bible from cover to cover in one year!

Answer:
 (spelled
 backwards)
 ELUNARG or
 ELGNAPS