



For God

so Loved the World,  
that he gave  
his only son,  
that whoever believes  
in him should not perish  
*but have eternal life.*

John 3:16

# The Messenger

A publication of Smyrna First United  
Methodist Church



*WELCOMING ALL, LOVING ALL,  
SERVING ALL*

PEACE LOVE HOPE JESUS PEACE LOVE HOPE JESUS

## FROM THE PASTOR: HOPE AWAITS

Advent begins this year on December 1, four Sundays before Christmas. Advent is also the official beginning of the church liturgical year, not January 1 like in the calendar year. The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means coming. During these four weeks, we prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ. We anticipate celebrating the birth of Christ at his first coming and the hope it offers for our world now. And we anticipate the second coming of Christ, when our long-awaited hope for a world devoid of sin and injustices and filled instead with peace, joy, and love will finally be realized. During Advent we wait for the coming of the One who is the Light of the world who is and will overcome the darkness.

The title of our Advent sermon series this year is Hope Awaits. With hope, there is always waiting. By its very definition, hope is longing for something to happen that hasn't happened yet. However, hope, true hope, isn't just an idle wish for something to happen but with no real expectation of it coming true. Hope is not mere wishful thinking. No, hope is also having a confident expectation or trust that what we hope for is going to happen. Hope is faith in the future.

In the cynical nothing but bad news world in which we live, it can be mighty hard to have faith in the future. But that is exactly what Advent is all about! Advent reminds us of God's ultimate bright future for us that is a sure thing. We see this hoped for future partially come to fruition with the birth of Christ. As we reflect on and celebrate what God has done in the past, it emboldens our hope in the future that still awaits.

Do you find yourself longing to feel hope again for yourself and for our world? There is no place better for you than to join us for this special Advent sermon series. Join us every Sunday in December at 8:30 am or 11 am for

Hope Awaits!

In hopeful expectation,  
Pastor Theresa



### ADVENT SERMON SERIES

December 1 Jeremiah 33:14-16  
Hope in a Coming Day

December 8 Malachi 3:1-4  
Hope in Preparation

December 15 Zephaniah 3:14-20  
Hope in Fresh Starts

December 22 Luke 1:26-45  
Hope in the Impossible

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service  
December 24

5:30 pm Luke 2:1-14

December 24

11:00 pm Lessons and Carols



Silent Night, Holy Night

**DECEMBER WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS**

**8:30 Greeters**

**Dec. 1 Scott Buchholz, Jan Schilling**

**8:30 Communion Servers**

**Bill & Sandra Abernathy**

**11:00 Liturgist**

**Dec. 1 Ken Sloane  
Dec. 8 Betty Cooley  
Dec. 15 Lynn Patterson  
Dec. 22 Nita Wright  
Dec. 29 Nita Wright**

**Coffee & Conversation**

**Sandra Abernathy  
UMM  
Motley Christians  
Nita Wright  
Combined Service**

**Children's Message**

**Lynn Patterson  
Pastor Theresa  
Ken Sloane  
Andi Steinberg**

**Dec. 24 Liturgist  
5:30 PM Michelle Martin  
11 PM Mary Ann Rogers**

**Communion Servers  
John & Norma Hawk**

**11:00 Ushers  
Barb Huebel, Frank Pitts**

**11:00 Communion Servers  
Susanne Kennedy, Lydia Oliver**



**Christmas Card Exchange**

The Christmas card box is located in the back of the Sanctuary. Please leave cards and notes for church members who attend services and will pick them up.

Please remember to check the box for any cards and notes that have been left for you.



**ADVENT Readers**

**8:30 AM**

**11 AM**

**December 1 Rick & Amy Wise**

**Neil & Mary Ann Rogers**

**December 8 Steve & Frankie Cashion**

**Andy Ferris Family**

**December 15 Carolyn Fox, Candy Kane**

**Betty & Tyler Cooley**

**December 22 Carey & Regan Eisher**

**Scott Elledge Family**

**December 24  
5:30 PM Becky Jenkins Family  
11:00 PM Ken & Bridget Sloane**



A few copies of the 2024 Advent Devotional Booklet are available on the table in the back of the Sanctuary.



## STEWARDSHIP: Too Much Stuff

Do you ever look around and think, “I have too much stuff”? I’m at that point in my life. My wife Bridget and I are empty nesters, yet our four-bedroom house feels crowded—books, tools, fabric, you name it.

As the holidays approach, I find myself telling people I don’t need more “stuff.” Maybe you feel the same or know someone who does. This brings up an important question: How can we, as followers of Jesus, celebrate his birthday by giving gifts that truly matter? What if we shifted our focus to giving gifts that meet real needs? Here are two ideas to spark your creativity:

- **Canned Food Donation:** Wrap a can of green beans with a label saying, “Merry Christmas! This represents a case of canned vegetables donated to the SFUMC food pantry to feed 12 families.” Bring the case of veggies to church to make it happen.
- **Backpack Program:** Purchase a luggage tag and replace the address card with a note that says, “Merry Christmas! I’ve donated a backpack filled with food for a child’s weekend meals.” Bring \$20 or \$25 to church in an envelope marked for the Backpack program.

These are just two ideas, but if you talk to some of our creative, mission-minded folks in our church, they will no doubt come up with some that will excite the “I’ve got too much stuff” people on your Christmas list! Adding this kind of gift-giving to your other shopping will still give something tangible to wrap while supporting church missions. The recipient gets a meaningful gift, and the end beneficiaries receive the help they truly need.

One year, my church raised funds for blankets for disaster victims through Church World Service. We made Valentine’s cards with a piece of blanket fabric inside as a “thank you” for donations. It was creative, calorie-free, and made a real difference.

This Advent/Christmas season, let’s get creative. Together, we can share Christ’s love in meaningful ways—helping those in need while lightening the burden of “too much stuff.”

Ken Sloane  
Stewardship Chair



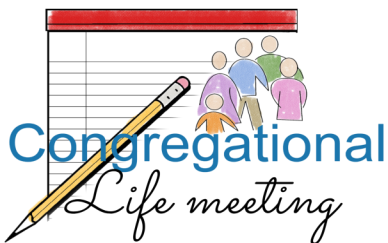
### UPCOMING BLOOD DRIVES

December 26, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Fellowship hall

January 9, 10:30 am - 4:30 pm

Sign up at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org)



If you are looking for a way to get plugged in at Smyrna 1st we are looking for volunteers to help out in several areas -

1. **Our card ministry** - Smyrna First is gearing up for our 2025 card ministry. This is a year long ministry that sends out cards for birthdays and anniversaries to our congregation. If you would like to know more or participate for 2025, please contact Gwen Graves at [gwenandsam@bellsouth.net](mailto:gwenandsam@bellsouth.net).
2. **Supper Club**-groups meet for dinner out monthly and are assigned to a randomly selected group for 4 months. Please let Julie Walker know by December 29 if you are interested, [jawalker4320@comcast.net](mailto:jawalker4320@comcast.net).

3. We are looking for volunteers to make coffee and provide juice and milk for Coffee and Conversation. If you are interested in volunteering for a Sunday, please reach out to Kim Culbertson Honey, [honey\\_k@comcast.net](mailto:honey_k@comcast.net). We are having a Brunch at 8:30 am, prior to our combined service December 29 getting ready to ring in the New Year. Please bring a brunch dish to share. Juice, milk and coffee will be provided.

Reserve January 26, 2025 at noon after the second service for a potluck Chili lunch with all the fixin’s  
Kim Honey, Co-Chair

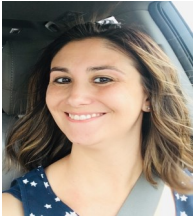


**The Sparrow's Nest**  
Mother's Day Out



**Hello Families of Preschoolers!  
ENROLL NOW**

Classes meet Monday and Wednesday,  
9 am - 2 pm,  
August through May.



We would love to be a part of your child's education!  
Check out our website: [smyrna1stumc.org](http://smyrna1stumc.org)  
For questions contact  
[sparrowsnestdirector@gmail.com](mailto:sparrowsnestdirector@gmail.com)

*A ministry of Smyrna First United Methodist Church*

Betsy Jordan, Director Currently taking applications for 3 & 4 year olds.

We invite you to attend the Christmas program presented by the children who attend The Sparrow's Nest, 11 am in fellowship hall on December 18th. You will receive a real blessing!

Jeanne McDonald  
Board Chair



We were honored by a visit in November from some members of the U.S. Navy. We had a great time saying the Pledge of Allegiance with them and listening to their stories. It was a great morning!

School families enjoyed our Friendsgiving meal served on November 20 in Fellowship Hall. There was lots of wonderful food and good fellowship.!



**DECEMBER Birthdays**

Jeff Jackson	12/5
Ken Sloane	12/6
Ashley Alagic	12/10
Matthew Ferris	12/13
Steve Picklesimer	12/17
Marie Tilley	12/18
Candy Kane	12/19
Susan Kuppler	12/19
Ken Cobble	12/20
Sheila Upham	12/20
Vera Bergstraesser	12/21
Lydia Oliver	12/22
Lindsay Oliver	12/22
Becky Bowles	12/26
Tasman Takayama	12/27
Theresa Johnson	12/29
Andi Steinberg	12/30
Linda Brown	12/31

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please notify the church office:  
[sandra.phelps@smyrnafirstumc.org](mailto:sandra.phelps@smyrnafirstumc.org)

**DECEMBER Anniversaries**

Mark & Georgette Norman	12/9
Eric & Janelle Garnett	12/20
Bill & Martha Hines	12/23
Tom & Barb Huebel	12/31



We are thankful for the faithfulness of Ron Patterson and Jeanne McDonald in working in the tech booth so that we are able to live stream our worship services. Without them and our other volunteers, it would not be possible.

Please consider volunteering to help in our tech booth with slides, camera, and/or sound during worship. The 8:30 service especially is in dire need of volunteers for this important ministry.

Talk to Jeanne McDonald if this would be your area of interest.





## HANGING OF THE GREENS

It was a full crew on Sunday, Nov. 24 when we prepared the Sanctuary for Advent.

Our thanks to all who participated. And lunch was great!



Wesley Foundation of Middle Tennessee invites you to visit a

PETTING ZOO AND  
LIVE NATIVITY SCENE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3  
5:00 - 7:00



Animals include camel, sheep, goats, zebu (mini cow), porcupine, African raccoon, pigs, lamas, alpacas

216 College Heights  
Murfreesboro



## MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

This has been a busy season and Smyrna First has been faithful in sharing with others. We were able to fill **23 Operation Christmas Child** boxes and we had a total of 42 Thanksgiving baskets to hand out to our Food Pantry customers. Fourteen of those baskets were provided by the employees of Dow Smith Construction. They really blessed us!!

As of this writing all the **Angels on the Angel Tree** have been adopted. It is always so much fun to pick an Angel and go shopping for the items on their list. I hope everyone enjoys it as much as I do. If you were not there on the 17th I am sorry you were not able to get an Angel.

The **food pantry** continues to serve our neighbors. In October we served 235 families for a total of 949 people. We really appreciate the congregation helping out with Sharing Sunday. In December we are asking for Ramen noodles again and in January how about cereal. Your contributions really do help our budget which definitely gets strained with all the people we are serving.

Thank you all for your generous spirits and willingness to help others. When we bless others God blesses us.

**Trish Pendleton**  
**Missions Chair**

## COMMUNION MINISTRY

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, believed that regular and frequent participation in the Lord's Supper is essential to Christian discipleship, not to mention that Jesus himself commanded us to observe it. Yet there are several in our church family who cannot attend worship for various reasons and who are missing receiving the presence of Christ in this sacred way. This ministry would be so simple yet would mean the world to several of our beloved church family members. All we really need are a few volunteers to make this ministry possible. We would love for 2025 to be the year we re-launch an organized home Communion ministry for those who aren't able to join us in person.

Please prayerfully consider whether you might be able to be an integral part of this vial ministry fulfilling our mission of "welcoming all, loving all, and serving all" as we offer Communion to every member of our church family. Let Pastor Theresa, our worship co-chairs Mary Ann Rogers and Lynn Patterson, or the church office know if you are interested or would like more information.



Choir Christmas Program, December 15, 11 am. This is a special Christmas concert by our chancel choir.

Christmas Eve Services at 5:30 and 11 pm. Worshippers will be supplied candles to hold during the services.

December 29 brunch at 8:30 am prior to our 10 am combined service loaded with Christmas Carols.

# SALT

(Senior Adults Living Triumphantly)  
For all who are 55+

We will gather in fellowship hall on December 19 for finger food and a game of "dirty Santa"! Party food will be handled by the board. Guests that want to participate are asked to bring a gift valued at \$10 to \$15 for the game.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 4 at 10 am in the conference room.

A graphic for a "Blue Christmas" service. It features a dark background with a bright blue starburst in the top left. The text reads: "Blue Christmas", "A service of hope for those who are grieving", "December 11 at 7:00 pm", "Smyrna First UMC", "301 Sam Davis Road", and "www.smyrna1stumc.org". There is a small image of a manger scene on the left.



Members of the Fellowship Sunday school class filled a flood bucket with emergency items and delivered it to the UMCOR drop-off location in Lebanon. The buckets will be used to help those impacted by Hurricane Helene.



Adopt a Roadway

Will you join us in December as we hold the pre-Christmas Adopt-a-Roadway cleanup of Enon Springs Road? Which December Saturday would you be available?

Arrangements need to be made with the town of Smyrna and let our congregation know.

Please contact Greg Upham, 615-512-0935 or the church office if you can help.



SMYRNA FIRST UMC  
**BREAKFAST WITH SANTA**

*Come and Enjoy a Pancake Breakfast*

**SATURDAY  
DECEMBER 7**  
301 SAM DAVIS ROAD  
SMYRNA, TN 37167  
8:30-10:30 AM



**FREE EVENT**

THERE WILL ALSO BE CRAFTS AND PICTURES WITH SANTA! WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU!

For more information:  
[WWW.SMYRNA1STUMC.ORG](http://WWW.SMYRNA1STUMC.ORG)  
OR CALL: 6154592826



**YOUTH  
CHRISTMAS**

# Progressive Dinner

December 15, 5 PM  
All youth meet at the church at 5 pm and we will carpool together to the Patterson's, Johnson's, and the Garnett's homes for the meal. Bring a gift for the gift exchange!

**GET CONNECTED WITH A SMALL GROUP AT SMYRNA FIRST**

Sunday school classes available each week:

- FELLOWSHIP, (Senior Women), 10 am, room 201
- MINGS (Men in Need of God's Strength), 10 am, room 312
- MOTLEY CHRISTIANS, (Mixed Adults), 10 am, room 303
- PAIRS & SPARES, (Baby Boomers), 10 am, room 307
- SEARCHERS, (Senior Adults), 10 am, room 305
- WINGS (Women in Need of God's Strength), 10 am, room 310
- YOUTH (6TH-12TH GRADES), 10 AM, Chapel, room 200
- 3RD-5TH GRADE & PRESCHOOL-2ND GRADE, 10 am, room 103



**THE ANGEL TREE IS HERE  
GIFTS ARE DUE BACK TO THE SANCTUARY ON DECEMBER 8.**

Gifts should be unwrapped in a gift bag with the Angel tag attached.

These may be the only gifts your Angel receives.

For questions, Cindy Fiala  
615-707-2690

As we close out 2024, here are the dates we will have and not have YOGA class. Join us and find your warmth, nourishment, focus, and energy during the holiday season.

- No Yoga Classes the week of Thanksgiving (November 26 and November 28)
- December 3 Tuesday at 11:00am YES
- December 5 Thursday at 6:00pm YES
- December 10 Tuesday at 11:00am YES
- December 12 Thursday at 6:00pm YES
- December 17 Tuesday at 11:00am YES
- December 19 Thursday at 6:00pm YES
- No Yoga Classes the week of Christmas (December 24 and December 26)
- No Yoga Class on News Years Eve (December 31)



Lynn Patterson

2024



This year we are offering poinsettias or you may donate to \*Project Peanut Butter (PPB)\* in honor or memory of family and friends. Poinsettias are \$10.00 each! **Place your order by December 8th.** (PLEASE PRINT!)

I would like to give \_\_\_ a poinsettia  
\_\_\_ a donation to PPB  
**in honor of:**

I would like to give \_\_\_ a poinsettia  
\_\_\_ a donation to PPB  
**in memory of:**

Total # Flowers Ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Donation to PPB: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Included with order: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please drop completed form in the offering plate or return to the church office.

**\*PROJECT PEANUT BUTTER (PPB)** seeks to advance the treatment of severe malnutrition, the single largest cause of child death in the world today, using effective, locally produced ready-to-use therapeutic foods. This nonprofit is formed to provide needed nutritional and medical support primarily to children suffering from severe acute malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

### FINANCIAL UPDATE BUDGET VS ACTUAL

NOV. Tithes & Offerings Rec'd	\$ 37,561.00
NOV. Budget Needs	\$ 39,786.00
NOV. Over/(Under) Budget	\$ ( 2,225.00)
YTD Balance Forward	\$ (96,234.00)
YTD Over/(Under) Budget Needs	\$ ( 98,459.00)

Use this QR code to access the VANCO donation page for a one time online donation or to set up recurring donations.



### SHARE YOUR TALENT

Smyrna First is making a list of talents and/or resources that members can provide to the congregation. If you or a family member possess a talent or have background in one of these areas and are willing to share it to help out someone in need, please let us know.

Place a check mark beside the area(s) you are willing to provide help to the congregation & kindly drop in the collection plate or leave in the church office. Many thanks for your help.

- \*Adult/child sitter \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Carpentry \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Car Repair \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*CPR Certified \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Construction \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Electrician \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Floral Design \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Foreign Language \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Foundation Repair \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*House Cleaning \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Landscaping/Lawncare \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Medical Background \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Painting \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Physical Therapy \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Personal Shopper \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Plumbing \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Pressure Washer \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Woodworking \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Other : \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE:**

- 8:30 AM Modern Worship
- 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation
- 10:00 AM Sunday School
- 11:00 AM Traditional Worship
- 4:00 PM Youth

**MONDAY SCHEDULE:**

- 9:00 AM Sparrow's Nest
- 6:00 PM Scouts
- 6:00 PM Sinfonietta Rehearsal

**TUESDAY SCHEDULE:**

- 11:00 AM Yoga Class

**WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE:**

- 9:00 AM Sparrow's Nest
- 3:00 PM Food Pantry
- 5:30 PM Pastor's Bible Study  
(as scheduled)
- 6:00 PM Hand Bells
- 7:00 PM Chancel Choir

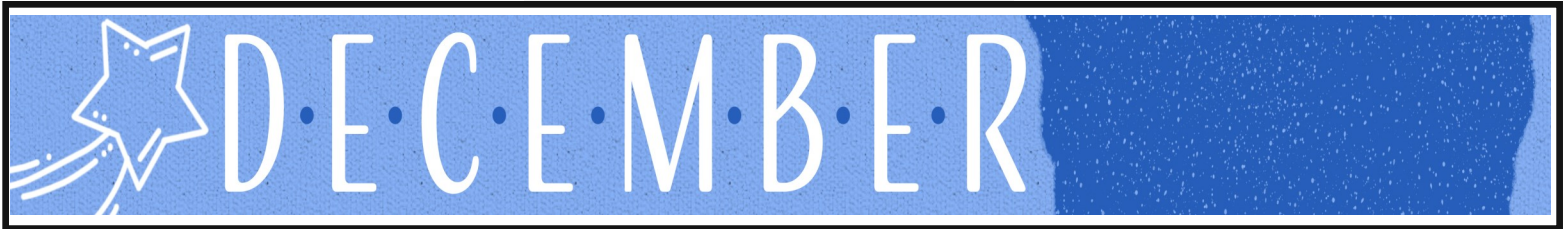
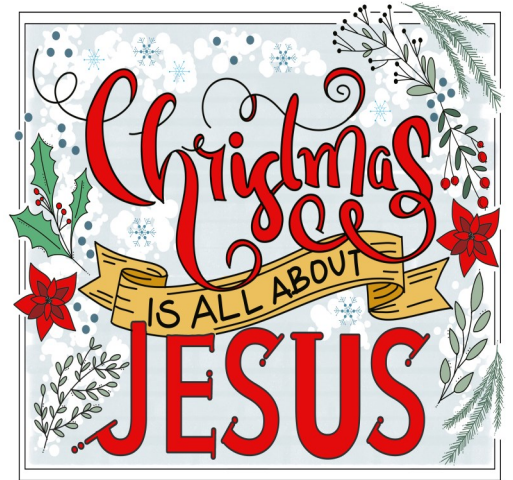
**THURSDAY SCHEDULE:**


- 6:00 PM Yoga Class
- 6:00 PM Praise Band

**FRIDAY SCHEDULE:**

- 10:00 AM Morning Glories  
(Dec. 13, 20)

Church Office Closed on Fridays



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 See Schedule	2 See Schedule	3 See Schedule 5:00 Trustees	4 See Schedule 10 am SALT Committee-CR 5:30 Brownie Troop	5 See Schedule 5:30 Pack Backpacks	6 See Schedule	7 <b>Breakfast With Santa 8:30 - 10:30 am Fellowship Hall</b>
8 See Schedule 7:30 Men's Breakfast  Angel Tree Gifts are due	9 See Schedule	10 See Schedule	11 See Schedule  7 pm Blue Christmas Service	12 See Schedule	13 See Schedule	14
15 See Schedule 11am Chancel Choir Christmas Concert 5 pm Youth Progressive Dinner	16 See Schedule	17 See Schedule	18 See Schedule	19 See Schedule  Noon SALT Luncheon	20 See Schedule	21 
22 See Schedule  11:00 FH Reserved	23 See Schedule	24 Office Closed  ← RCS WINTER BREAK		26 Blood Drive 9:30 am - 3:30 pm Office Closed	27 See Schedule	28
29 See Schedule  8:30 BRUNCH 10:00 Combined Worship	30 See Schedule	31 See Schedule	RCS WINTER BREAK →			
Complete Cleaning Crew is on campus every Friday, 1:00-5:00 pm to clean our buildings.						FH=Fellowship Hall

**SMYRNA FIRST  
UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH**

301 Sam Davis Road  
Smyrna, TN 37167

Address Correction  
Requested

Tel: 615-459-2826

Visit us online:  
smyrna1stumc.org  
Facebook: @sfumc.tn  
Instagram: @sfumc.tn  
Twitter: @sfumc\_tn

**Sparrow's Nest  
Parents Day Out**

Monday &  
Wednesday  
9 am - 2 pm  
More Info:  
sparrowsnest  
director@  
gmail.com

*“Smyrna First UMC  
is a community  
who is passionate  
about welcoming  
all, loving all and  
serving all so that  
we may offer  
Christ to all.”*

**WORSHIP**  
*with us*

**8:30 am Modern      11:00 am Traditional**



**Dec. 11 Blue Christmas Service, 7 PM**  
**Dec. 15 Choir Christmas Concert, 11 AM**  
**Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Services**  
**5:30 PM and 11 PM**  
**Dec. 29 Brunch at 8:30, Combined Worship 10 AM**

**CHURCH STAFF**

Pastor.....Rev. Theresa Johnson  
Worship Music Leader.....Branson Clark  
Youth Ministries Director.....Andi Steinberg  
Organist.....Bobby Medlen  
Pianist.....Jesse Bobick  
Office Manager.....Sandra Phelps  
Financial Secretary.....Andi Steinberg  
Sparrow's Nest Director.....Betsy Jordan  
Custodial.....Complete Cleaning Concepts

