

Mount Vernon Gazette

'Angel Gifts' Given with Love Church celebrates annual blessing of gifts.

By Chuck Hagee, Gazette

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More than 600 gifts were distributed Sunday night, Dec. 14, to needy families at Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church, 8220 Russell Road, just off Richmond Highway in Lee District. It marked the church's 11th Annual Blessing of the Angel Gifts.

"These gifts have been purchased specifically for each of you. They are not generic gifts. They are what you specifically requested. They represent the sharing of the love of those that purchased them for you," the Rev. Keary Kincannon, pastor, Rising Hope UMMC, told those who filled the church sanctuary.

And, this was only the beginning of the church's annual Christmas giving campaign. Beginning Dec. 16, Rising Hope opened its annual Christmas Shop that supplies gifts to those in need. It will be open Dec. 16, 17, and 18 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. each of those days.

"We estimate that we will distribute more than 1,000 gifts before Christmas. And, every one of them comes with love from the donor to the recipient," Kincannon said.

On Dec. 23, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., the church will provide Christmas food baskets to needy families, according to Laura Derby, program and office administrator, Rising Hope UMMC.

Beginning at 7 p.m. Dec. 24 a candle light service will be held. On Christmas day the church provides a traditional holiday feast on site. "This is the full dinner — turkey, ham, potatoes, pies, everything but the goose," Kincannon told the crowd Sunday night.

Prior to distributing the actual gifts, Kincannon blessed three symbolic gifts in the sanctuary. Coordination and distribution of the actual Angel Gifts was overseen by Rising Hope members Sam and LuAnn Mudrak. LuAnn Mudrak chaired the Angel Project ministry this year.

The project is made possible by donations from the following churches and organizations: Andrew Chapel UMC, Annandale UMC, Cameron UMC, Christ UMC, Franconia UMC, Immanuel UMC, Washington Farm UMC, Washington Street UMC, St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, Burke UMC Youth Group, Mount Vernon Rotary Club, and Washington Street Preschool.



Photo by Chuck Hagee/The Gazette
Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church on Russell Road in southeastern Lee District is packed with members during the annual Blessing of the Angel Gifts service kicking off the Christmas season.



Photo by Chuck Hagee/The Gazette
The Rev. Keary Kincannon, pastor, Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church, blesses three symbolic gifts at the completion of the church's annual Blessing of the Angel Gifts service which initiates the church's observance of the Christmas season.



Photo by Chuck Hagee/The Gazette
Dale Turner, an original member of Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church, and her two children, Briana and Christopher, hold the gifts they received

following the church's annual Blessing of the Angel Gifts service.

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