



First Church Tucson Weekly Digest



“Advent Aspiration”

By Bishop Hoshibata on December 1st, 2020

The season of Advent is here! Usually a joyful, expectant time for the Christian family, this year, Advent comes amid the “darkness” of a time of challenge and separation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than ever before, we need to hear the Advent messages of hope, peace, joy and love, preparing us for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. More than ever before, Jesus’ love must be the center of our life as Christ-followers.

Recently, the Western Jurisdiction launched its media campaign, Where Love Lives, to share the good news of the foundations of our faithfulness to God’s call to be disciples of Jesus Christ, following in the path of our Wesleyan heritage and claiming the spirit of United Methodism. The familiar approach to learning about God: Scripture, tradition, reason and experience are building blocks of our foundation as are the 3 Simple Rules from Bishop Ruben Job: do no harm, do good, stay in love with God. But it is not only about the building blocks that brought us to this point in our history as a church. Where Love Lives is our aspirational opportunity to proclaim a deep hope that courses through our being in the west: to be a place where love lives within the diversity that God created in the human family. We may not be there yet, but it is what we hope to become, what we are actively striving to, and what we reach toward.

I learned the foundational building blocks as I grew up in The United Methodist Church. From moments of learning about Jesus in Sunday School and youth group, to giving through service and tithing, to expressions in worship, prayer, fellowship, and Bible study, to the breaking of bread together in communion and in pot lucks; I came to understand

that The United Methodist Church was a place where love lives and where love was to be offered to everyone, because all are welcome in God's home.

Our United Methodist Church, especially in the west, strives to be a home for all God's people: an aspiration to live with one another, even with our differences of opinion. During this season of Advent, God calls us to goals of living in hope, abiding in peace, rejoicing in faith, and loving all persons. We seek to live into the vision where "the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them... They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:6 and 9)

And who is the little child? None other than the Christ child whose birth we will soon celebrate. As God's love became Emmanuel, God with us, may our labors lead us into becoming a place Where Love Lives.

Advent blessings,

Bishop Bob

"I seek always to bring God's love to those in need."
~ Bishop Karen Oliveto

"Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can"
~ John Wesley



"Double Rainbow from the back porch looking east toward town."

Photo by Nan Rollings

“Jupiter and Saturn closing in together for the ‘Bethlehem Star’ union on December 21st.”

Photo by Paul Cho



THIS WEEK'S
ANNOUNCEMENTS & GATHERINGS

The 5 Love Languages for Advent Study

Join us on Zoom for our Advent Study on the 5 Love Languages; Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Quality Time, Gifts, and Physical Touch. Sessions start at 10:30am (12:00pm in Korean) following the Sunday Morning Live! stream. Follow the link

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/97274927766?pwd=bVlqNmZjTk84bHFHd0JRS0U5R0c4Zz09>

ZID: 972 7492 7766

PW: 6226481

Christmas Virtual Choir

Visit bit.ly/fumcvirtualchoir and watch the video or click the Orientation PDF for information about how you can join in song and spirit in the comfort and safety of your home. Contact pastor@firstchurchtucson.org for questions. Video submissions are due this Wednesday by midnight.

Recruiting Weekly Digest Contributors

Email office@firstchurchtucson.org, text (520)850-4547, or submit your holiday pictures at <https://bit.ly/fumcsubmit> and share your joy with our family of faith.

Women on a Spiritual Quest

*WSQ is joining in the Advent Study on Sundays this season.
Monday gatherings are cancelled.*

Exploring Biblical Wisdom

Gather for group Lectio Divina as we seek spiritual formation through scripture reading, reflecting, and sharing the Spirit that lives in each of us. **Tues @ 11AM.**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/98179862680?pwd=ck15OU5KbWUyY0NwOUNxbzJkOUVBUT09>

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Progressive Christianity Book Study

We are on break until January 7th, 2021.

Sunday Morning Live!

Join us live on Sunday mornings on Youtube. **Sun @ 10AM**

Visit <https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube> and subscribe to the channel.
(Address is case-sensitive.)

Korean Language Ministry

금 주일 오전 10시에 Zoom에서 연합 예배로 드립니다.

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/97274927766?pwd=bVlqNmZjTk84bHFHd0JRS0U5R0c4Zz09>

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금 오후 7시에는 기존 Zoom 방에서 성경말씀 묵상 나눔이 있습니다.

The Longest Night Virtual Worship Service

Save the date! Reconciling Ministries Network will hold a worship service livestream on Facebook and Youtube focusing on grief and loss as well as mystery, possibility, and the beauty of darkness. **Dec 21st @ 6 PM**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/344665103018106/permalink/573089380175676/>

Christmas Day Virtual Party

Thank you for keeping social distance and restricting travel during this season. We know it will be especially difficult for those of us who may now need to spend Christmas Day alone. For those of you who can, we would love to see you at our virtual Christmas party over Zoom! We are preparing games and fun for our time of gathering so join in our fellowship on **Dec 25th @ 10 AM**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/97274927766?pwd=bVlqNmZjTk84bHFHd0JRS0U5R0c4Zz09>

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Support the Ministries at First Church Tucson

Now is the time to give courageously to ministries that matter to you.

Visit this [link](#) or go to www.bit.ly/givetofumc to set up online donation.

You may also send gifts via Paypal to recipient address: finance@firstchurchtucson.org

And as always, you can mail in checks to the church office. Alternatively, have your IRA advisor automatically make payments from your IRA to the FUMC checking account.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Jim Rollings (Dec 19)

(If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so we can update our records!)

SONG FOR THOUGHT

“The First Song of Isaiah”

J. N. White

by **Lorena Suarez**

Director of Music Ministries on December 13, 2020

Composer and church musician, Jack Noble White was born in Texas in 1938. He wrote the music for the anthem *The First Song of Isaiah*. For the text, he chose the Canticle 9, Ecce, Deus, which is based on Isaiah 12:2-6. These words celebrate the return of Israel from exile.

The song was first published in 1976, and since then, it has been sung all around the world.

There are many arrangements of this anthem: for mixed choir, for children choir, for handbell choir, and a variety of instrumental options. The song starts with the refrain, which is the second verse of the canticle. Here all voices sing in unison, later the melody is harmonized. The three stanzas are placed in between the refrains. Enjoy!

Lyrics:

*Surely, it is God who saves me;
I will trust in him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense,
and he will be my Savior.*

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing
from the springs of salvation.
And on that day you shall say,
Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Make his deeds known among the peoples;
see that they remember that his Name is exalted.
Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things,
and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy,
for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Suggested recording:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zcGKbaqIuE

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LECTIO DIVINA PRAYER GUIDE

for Individuals and Families

CENTERING - *Practice Square Breathing*

- Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds,
- Exhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds.
- Repeat as necessary.

SONG OF PRAISE

Select a song of your choice, or
Refer to this week's Song for Thought

OPENING PRAYER - *Psalms 19:14*

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

READING

Isaiah

REFLECTING

Take a minute or two in silence.
Allow your thoughts to rest on a word, a phrase, a memory from this passage.
Journal or share your thoughts from this moment of meditation on the passage.

RESPONDING

Respond to the reflection through the guidance from the Holy Spirit.

MINUTE MEMOIR - by Paul Cho

Isaiah's prophecy speaks to so many of us who identify with the returning Israelites, those who have been oppressed, heartbroken, burned out, held in captivity... those who struggle in the wilderness. Very plainly, our God restores. Our God seeks to renew, to revive, and restore us, especially in those dark and lonely places in our lives, because our God is love and our God loves justice. So we may rest in hope, in peace, even in joy as we God moves in and through us to establish justice that sets us free.

If we have been blessed to not know this kind of hardship, this kind of pain, this kind of longsuffering, then let us give thanks to God. And, let us acknowledge that this blessing comes with responsibility. It is the responsibility to hear and learn from the sufferers, to ensure injustice stops, to take our places of privilege and help those in need. We participate in the suffering of others, because this is where we shall find God. As a Christmas people, people who have encountered God Emmanuel, God with us, in Christ Jesus, let us set forth to join in with those whom our God shall restore.

RESTING

Dwell in your reflection and response.
Take time to offer God praise and glory.
Repent and seek forgiveness.

Offer joys and the concerns, adding in your personal prayers.
Lastly, offer a thanksgiving for God's grace and mercy.

CLOSING PRAYER *Wesley Covenant Service Prayer*

I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
exalted for you, or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
915 E. 4th St., Tucson, AZ 85719
www.firstchurchtucson.org
office@firstchurchtucson.org | pastor@firstchurchtucson.org
(Office) 520-622-6481 | (Pastor Paul) 520-850-4547