



*"I am the vine, you are the branches.
He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit;
for without Me you can do nothing." John 15:5*



baldwin first
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Newsletter • December 2024

Pastor's Corner

As I see it...



It is Christmastime, the wonderful time of the year. For the four Sundays we have in December, we focus on the hope, peace, joy, and love Jesus Christ offers the world. The promised birth of Jesus Christ brought "great light" (Isaiah 9:2) and "good tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10) to the world. Those are themes for this wonderful time of the year.

So far, I hope your Advent is meaningful and hope filled. Even as we prepare with the joy of expecting the arrival of the Christ-Child, leading up to Christmas Day can be stressful and hectic for some of us. In the rush to Christmas, I encourage you to slow down, pause, and experience the joy that comes with the light that radiated through the darkness.

Sunday, December 1, marks the first Sunday of Advent and also the Advent choir will be singing Christmas songs at Baldwin First. Frank Ramirez will preach on my behalf at Baldwin First and at Ives Chapel. Please invite your friends and neighbors to come and enjoy the message of hope, and Christmas music. Talk to Kelly - Bethel Smith if you are interested in joining the choir at Baldwin First.

On Sunday December 8th, I will preach on the subject of "peace" that Jesus brought to the world when he was

born. We will have the Living Nativity Festival on December 7th at Baldwin First. This will be performed during the Festival of Lights from 5-6 pm. Please remember to stop by to greet the Shepherds, wise men, and Holy Family. Enjoy delicious, warm soups being served at Baldwin First UMC fellowship Hall from 4:30-6 pm. This will be a fundraiser for the Baldwin First United Methodist Women of Faith.

Don't miss Christmas carols Sunday December 22nd at Baldwin First. This is the Sunday I will preach on the "love" that Jesus Christ offers, and also a Sunday we will sing nearly all the Christmas carols and share stories about the birth of Jesus Christ. Christmas Eve service will be at Ives Chapel at 7 pm, and Baldwin First UMC at 5 and 11 pm along with the candle lighting in both churches. This will be a great time to invite your family members, friends, co-workers, and neighbors who don't normally attend church worship services. Perhaps this will be a great time for them to enjoy and experience Christmas.

Have a merry Christmas and keep sharing the light of Christ-child!

Pastor Ezekiel



Soup Dinner / Living Nativity

Baldwin First has two events on Saturday, December 7 during the Festival of Lights.

Come enjoy delicious, warm soups at UMF's annual soup dinner from 5-7 pm! Fifteen to twenty crockpots of soups are needed.

Soup donations are needed! Donna Curran has a sign up form in the narthex. Desserts are provided! Awards will be given for the top three soups!

The Living Nativity will be performed from 5-6 pm.



Advent Bible Study



Join Rev. Ezekiel for a Bible Study, *Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph, the Miracle of Christ's birth through the Eyes of His Father, Joseph*. The studies will be held Sunday's at 4 pm in the church library on December 8, 15, and 22. A signup form may be found in the narthex or contact the church office to enroll.

Christmas Eve Services

Invite your family and friends to our Christmas Eve services at 5 or 11 pm! All are welcome to come celebrate the birth of our Savior!

SUNDAY WORSHIP

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Worship | 9:30 am |
| Sunday School | 10:30 am |
| Adult Bible Studies | 10:30 am |
| B.L.A.S.T. Youth Group | 10:30 am |

Childcare service for Pre-K and under is available in the lower level across from Fellowship Hall.

Children's bags can be borrowed during service. They may be found in the narthex.

DECEMBER EVENTS

December 7

Soup Supper & Living Nativity
@ 5-7 pm
Baldwin City Festival of Lights

December 8

Bible Study @ 4-5 pm

December 14

UMW Holiday Brunch @ 10-11:30

December 15

Advent Choir, @ 8:30 am Rehearsal
Children's Program @ 9:30 am
Bible Study @ 4-5 pm, Library
Bones Midwest Trombone Concert
@ 4 pm, Sanctuary

December 22

Bible Study @ 4-5 pm, Library

December 24

Family Christmas Eve Service,
@ 5 pm
Christmas Eve Service @ 11 pm

Advent Choir



Older youth and adults will perform on the first Sunday of Advent. All ages, including little ones, will sing on Sunday, December 15. Meet at 8:45 am for brush-up rehearsal then they will sing during the 9:30 am service. Contact the church office or Kelley Bethell-Smith for details.

Did You Know???

There are two adult Sunday school classes that meet at 10:30 am each Sunday?

- Lamplighters meets in the library using a book and videos. Currently the topic is "Mysteries of the Middle Ages-The Early Church." This lesson is being taught by Dennis Domer.
- Journey class meets in Beeks Chapel. They are currently studying the Book of Isaiah. Round table discussion is the preferred way of learning. The class is led by Walt Bailey.

Come visit a class this Sunday! Everyone is welcome!

UMW Holiday Brunch

United Methodist Women will be hosting a holiday brunch on December 14 at 10 am in Fellowship Hall.

Bring a snack as we gather gift bags for the food pantry and craft ornaments for the residents of the care centers.

Bags may be sponsored for \$7. Contact Donna Curran for details.



Bones Midwest Concert



Frank Perez and his trombone group are having a free concert on December 14 at 4 pm. The event will be held in the church sanctuary.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Doug Cheek, Chair
Nancy Arnold
Ryan Berg
Mike Curran
Christi Darnell
Carolyn Groves
Marcia O'Neil
Brad Peterson
Pam Sharp
Katherine Cook, Secretary

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please contact the church office, Rev. Ezekiel Koech, or Linda Ballinger for pastoral care needs and to be added to the prayer list.

Linda Ballinger,
Care Giving Team Leader,
913-980-3831

Rev. Ezekiel Koech, Pastor
785-324-9174

Let us remember and pray for:

Carolyn, Jennifer, Scott, Tom, Russ,
Otis, Cyrus, Judith, Louise, Mary,
Donna DeGraffenreid Cumley,
Pastor Ezekiel's safe return,
all who are ill,
all who are lonely,
all who mourn.

Missions Team News

The Baldwin Community Food Pantry was the recipient of a \$1,000 donation from Heritage Tractor as part of their Americana Traveling Tractor program. With the money, we purchased small kitchen appliances for our neighbors. After surveying them as to their needs, we were able to distribute 36 blenders, hand mixers, coffee pots, toaster ovens, and sandwich makers. Many thanks to Heritage Tractor for choosing the Community Food Pantry!

Susan Butell, Team Leader

Pastor Ezekiel's Mission Trip

Pastor sent a few pictures showing him working on water purification containers in Kenya. He has been working with Cheptuech Africa Gospel Church members fitting purification kits to water containers so that the elderly people in the village can have drinkable water. There are many waterborne diseases in the villages because people fetch water from creeks and drink it with no purification. As a result, they find themselves with disease such as h.pylori, cholera, schistosomiasis, dysentery, and typhoid. It has killed mostly the elderly people because their immunity is very weak. Pastor Ezekiel felt called to teach them how to purify water before they drink it.

We look forward to more details of his trip when he returns this week and pray for his safe return home!



LOVE.SERVE.DISCIPLE.

Since 1855, the mission of Baldwin First UMC is to love and serve God and our neighbors as disciples of Jesus Christ.

ALL ARE WELCOME

Believing that all persons are created by God and loved through and by Jesus Christ, the people of Baldwin First United Methodist Church understand that our neighbors include persons of all ages, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientation and identity, economic or marital status, and physical and mental condition, and are welcome to participate in the life of our congregation.

CONTACT US

Rev. Ezekiel Koech, Pastor
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Church Office
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office@baldwinfirst.org

Office Hours
Tuesday - Thursday
10 am - 2 pm

Website
baldwinfirst.org

Social Media
@baldwinfirstumc



Giving

We believe that all people are a gift from God, so it is important that you decide how your gifts are used by the Church. There are three ways for you to give financially. Please review the options below before submitting your offering. Go to **baldwinfirst.org/give** for more information. or scan the QR code.



Baker Student Sunday



Thank you to Rev. Kevin Hopkins and Baker University students for their participation in Student Sunday on November 17. It is refreshing to see college students sharing their joy for Christ with us!

Participating students were Katie Slice, Sam Slice, Sephana Achi, Abbie Jones, Peri Schmidt, and Kailey Hanks. We wish you best of luck on your finals!

A Christmas Creed

I believe in Jesus Christ and in
the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.
I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a
little town;
and whose spirit still brings music to persons
all over the world,
in towns both large and small.



I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room,
and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life
today.

I believe in the one whom the rulers of the earth ignored
and the proud could never understand;
whose life was among common people,
whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible:

I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms,
whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth,
who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them,
who by love brought sinners back to purity,
and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess my ever-lasting need of God:

The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed,
the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe in God who gives us the best of himself.

I believe in Jesus, the son of the living
God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world.

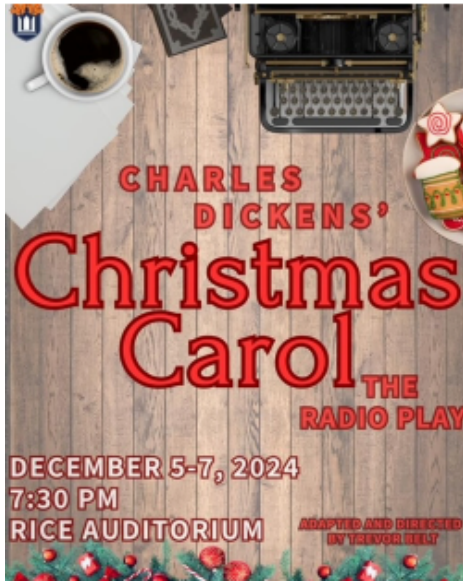
MISSION TEAM MEMBERS

Nancy Arnold
Susan Butell
John & Marilee Beins
Coleen Burgess
Kelley Bethell-Smith
Martha Harris



BALDWIN  FIRST

Community Events



Christmas Candlelight Vespers

Sunday, December 8, 2024
2:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Rice Auditorium



Festival of Lights Parade

At 6 p.m. floats draped in thousands of lights parade down 8th and High Streets. As the last float goes by, the Mayor's Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony will commence beside City Hall followed by pictures with Santa Claus. Fireworks will be in the east following the ceremony. Thank you to Mediacom Communications Corp. for sponsoring the parade!

Holiday Bazaar at New Life

118 5th Street | 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Come and enjoy the special feelings of the Christmas season! Enjoy cookies and hot cider while shopping handmade crafts for that special gift. We will be serving lunch this year!

Santa will make a special appearance at 1:00 p.m. so the kids can visit while you shop!

