

The Messenger

First United Methodist Church of Mexico

December 2017
From the Pastor...



Beloved,

Every year during Advent (the season of preparation before Christmas) we focus on the same four themes: hope, peace, love, and joy. But what do these each mean, and how do we move deeper into our experience of each of these aspects of Christian life?

Hope. Hope is an expectation that a certain thing will happen. At its core, hope is trust. During the Advent season we delve into the promises of scripture that say that darkness will give way to light, suffering will give way to joy, and death will give way to new life.

Cultivate hope: Keep a gratitude journal. Make a daily habit of writing down the good things that have come into your life, so that you can see glimpses of light even during deepest darkness. Pray daily, and read the Bible regularly.

Peace. Oh, beloved, this one might be the hardest to keep this time of year. In a song from her Christmas album Amy Grant sings, “I need a silent night / a holy night / to hear an angel voice / through the chaos and the noise...” Can you relate? Do you yearn for peace? Shalom (the word from the Bible often translated as “peace”) is not just the absence of violence, but is a state of holistic well-being. Shalom is achieved when we are most fully and thoroughly living as God intended us to. During Advent, we are particularly called to make choices that move us toward a state of peace, so that we might bear Christ’s light to a world in desperate need.

Cultivate peace: Start by working toward your own well-being. When we come closer to achieving shalom, we not only experience peace for ourselves, but exude it so that others may know peace.

Love. The Bible (particularly the words of Jesus and of Paul) is packed with reminders of the importance of love. According to Jesus, love is central to the fulfillment of the greatest commandment. Our first call is to love God with every fiber of our being. Our second is to love ourselves; and our third call is to use the love we show ourselves as a template for the way we love others. If we acknowledge that love is not just something we feel but is a choice we make, our Advent preparation ought to include an honest examination of our own words and actions. Are we loving God, ourselves, and our neighbors well?

Cultivate love: Commit to doing something intentional each day to show love to God, self, and others.

Joy. First, a word of clarification. Joy and happiness are not the same thing. Happiness is external. It depends on the circumstances in my life. Joy is internal, and can be present even in the absence of happiness. Joy allows us to continue praising God, even when the forces around us are making it hard to be happy.

Cultivate joy: Draw close to God in every way you can. For most people, this is the most immediate and effective way to experience joy. (Please know, though, that I recognize how hard joy is to achieve for those living with mental illness. If this is the case for you, know that you are not any less holy by not experiencing joy. I pray that you will receive the good care you need to be able to experience joy as I have.)

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Beloved, we are called to bring hope, peace, love, and joy to the world. Before we can do that, though, we must work hard to experience these things for ourselves. So I beseech you, dear ones, to do all you can this Advent season to prepare your hearts for the coming of Christmas. I'll see you in worship.

Advent Worship Schedule

- Nov. 26 at 10am – Worship includes lighting the candles.
- Dec. 3 at 10am – Worship includes decorating the Chrismon tree.
- Dec. 10 at 10am – Worship features the children's Christmas play.
- Dec. 17 at 10am – Worship is followed by church-wide Christmas caroling.
- Dec. 21 at 7pm – Longest Night (Blue Christmas) service for those grieving during the holidays.
- Dec. 24 at 10am – A Service of Lessons and Carols
- Dec. 24 at 4pm – Family-oriented Christmas Eve Service
- Dec. 24 at 9pm – Traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Love,
Pastor Emily

IMPORTANT DATES

- Dec. 2: Christmas in Mexico, 9am-4pm
Christmas Bazaar at Mexico First United Methodist, 9am-4pm
- Dec. 4: Administrative Council Meeting, 6:30pm
- Dec. 9: UMMen's Christmas Breakfast Meeting
Spouses invited, 8:30am
- Dec. 10: Sunday School Christmas Program
- Dec. 11: Trustees Committee Meeting, 6:30pm
- Dec. 17: Youth Pizza Party, Cookie Decorating,
And Christmas Caroling, Noon
- Dec. 21: Longest Night Service, 7pm
- Dec. 24: Worship with Lessons and Carols, 10am
Family-oriented Christmas Eve Service, 7pm
Traditional Christmas Eve Service, 9pm
- Dec. 25: Jesus's Birthday ~ Merry Christmas!



THANK YOU, THANK YOU, TO...

- ~ Mary Loysen for sponsoring this issue of the church newsletter.
- ~ those who made the 115 pillowcase dresses for the Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes.

Luke 2:8-12

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Dec. 1: A: John & Carol Aldrich
2: Ralph Goodwin, Ethan Russell
4: Dotty Parker, Alexis Jackson
6: Patrick Kugler
10: A: Phil & Flora Kugler
11: Judy Butman
13: Sue Loysen, Jacob Huyge
16: Christy Hall
22: Gary Weber
23: A: Robert & Georgia Halstead
A: Bill & Judy Butman
24: Mary Loysen
26: Jeffrey Sherman
30: Connie Main



MEXICO FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH REACHING OUT AT CHRISTMAS...

On behalf of our church the Outreach Committee
is reaching out this Christmas to:

- * **Operation Christmas Child** with 337 shoeboxes (www.samaritanspurse.org).
- * **Redbird Mission** with Christmas shoebox supplies. Redbird is a Methodist ministry in Beverly, KY. (rbmission.org) * \$300.00 value.
- * **Operation Reindeer** – the local ministry providing gifts for children in need. * \$300.00
- * **Unity Acres** – warm socks and decks of playing cards for the men living at the Catholic work farm in Orwell, NY (unityacres.org).
- * **Brown Memorial United Methodist Church** in Syracuse, NY. * \$300.00.

Our Best Two Days of the Year

By: Rose Ann Myers, Outreach Committee Member

The Outreach committee wants to thank everyone that has supported our shoebox project this year. Many of you have generously brought in donations every month for us. These items were brought in my basement where they were taken out of their packages, sorted, boxed and stored.

On November 3rd, many people came to the house and helped us carry them back upstairs and bring them to church. Yet, other people helped us set up the tables and group our treasures into appropriate age groups.

Come Saturday morning, during the Packing Party, members of our congregation and the community began assembling our boxes. We had everyone from four year-olds to grandparents working to assure that many children around the world would be given a gift of hope and love.

Thank you also, to the people who donated money for postage, and to Barb L. and Cathy S. who worked in the kitchen to keep our stomachs satisfied during the Packing Party.

What started out as a church project has blossomed into a community event. This is the real meaning of Christmas.

Thank you again. Rose Ann



The GIVING TREE... REVISITED



Again this Advent season, the women's Friendship Unit will be hosting a "GIVING TREE". An artificial Christmas tree is set up in the narthex ready to be decorated with donated hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves that will then be given to the local food pantry for distribution to needy families in our community. Donations will be accepted through the Dec. 17th service.

Thank you all.

GIFTS for UNITY ACRES



The Outreach Committee is collecting warm socks (new) and decks of playing cards (new), for the men living at Unity Acres, in Orwell. A labeled collection box will be in the narthex of the church to place the socks and playing cards in. These will be delivered to the Acres before Christmas as small gifts for the men. Thank you for donating if you can.

RECIPE CORNER: *This month's recipe comes from the kitchen of Rose Ann Myers, who made this tasty dessert for the workers helping move the Operation Christmas Child shoebox supplies from the Myers home to the church. This recipe has the perfect presentation for a holiday table.*

Rose Ann's Cherry Danish

Danish

1 3/4 cup sugar
1 cup margarine/butter, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla
4 eggs
3 cups flour
1 1/2 teaspoon. baking powder
21 oz. can cherry filling

Glaze

1 cup powdered sugar
1 - 2 Tablespoons milk
1/2 teaspoons almond extract

For Danish: Grease and flour cookie sheet. In a large bowl cream sugar, butter and vanilla until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each egg. Blend in dry ingredients. Spread 2/3 of batter on cookie sheet. Spread fruit over top. Spoon remaining batter by teaspoonful over the top. Bake 350 degrees for 35 - 45 min.

For Glaze: Combine and drizzle over the top. Enjoy!!





Poinsettia Reservations

It is time once again to fill the sanctuary with poinsettias as we honor and remember our loved ones during the Christmas season.

You can help by purchasing a Poinsettia in honor or in memory of loved ones.

The cost of each poinsettia is \$12.00, and checks can be made out to:

First United Methodist Church.

Given by: _____

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

Number given: _____ X 12.00 = _____

*Please turn in your order by:
Sunday, December 17, 2017
Thank you.*

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS in MEXICO CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Saturday, December 2, 9am – 4pm

Everyone is invited to shop for crafts, handmade items, baked goods and more. If you are a baker, baked goods are welcome for the sale. Volunteers are welcome for set up Friday, noon – 5pm, and for assistance during the bazaar. All proceeds go to our church budget.

Serving in December...

Greeters

Dec. 3: Duane and Sue Morton

Dec.10: _____

Dec: 17: _____

Dec. 24: 10am Mary Beth & Sparky

Dec 24: 4pm Bill & Judy Butman

Dec 24: 9pm Rita & Grant DeLong

Dec 31: Mike & Kelly Freihofer

COFFEE HOUR

Many thanks to anyone who makes contributions of such items as: chips, pretzels, dip, vegetables, fruit, and baked goods. These are always appreciated.

MONDAY'S MEAL

Dec. 4: Rose Ann & Wayne Myers/Alicia W.

Dec. 11: Jane Backus and Michael Backus

Dec. 18: Cathy Stock and Lori Behling

Dec. 25: No meal served.

TRASH DUTY

Jeremy Spencer

COUNTERS

Rita DeLong and Sharon Anderson

POSTPONED...

Due to too many scheduling conflicts, the December Progressive Dinner has been cancelled. We are looking at possibly holding a dinner in February around Valentine's day.

Recent Words from our Covenant Relationship Missionary

November 1, 2017

Dearest friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus, and greetings from Kyiv, Ukraine! Here in eastern Europe, the warmth of summer is already a distant memory; the nights are cool and crisp, and the leaves of trees are turning color and starting to fall. In the Ukrainian language, the names of the months are derived from words that describe the natural elements of that season. For example, the Ukrainian word for October is *жовтень* (zhovten'), which comes from the word *жовтий* (zhovtiy), or "yellow," in reference to the yellowing of the leaves during this season. Similarly, November in Ukrainian is *листопад* (listopad), which literally means "the falling of leaves." What a blessing to recognize the beauty of God's creation in the names of the months of the year!

With the new fall season also comes a new season of ministry with international students in Kyiv. Each week, students from Africa gather together in a variety of locations for worship and fellowship. On Sunday mornings, the international community joins the Russian-speaking UMC congregation in Kyiv for praise and worship. Each Wednesday evening, the community gathers in a student's apartment for a meal, Bible study, and prayer. On occasion, such as last month, students from our UMC community join with other African young adults for a multi-denominational service of worship. It is an honor and blessing for me to serve with this community: to preach the word and celebrate communion, to lead Bible study, and to represent the United Methodist Church in mission service here in Ukraine.

Unfortunately, this new season has also seen an increase in political unrest in Kyiv. As the war continues in eastern Ukraine, here in the capital city there have been ongoing demonstrations against the government. Though civilians and police occasionally engage in skirmishes, thankfully there has not been a repeat of the widespread violence that engulfed Kyiv during the winter of 2013-14. Please join with me in prayer for the people of Ukraine, that their political differences may be solved peacefully, and that the war in the eastern region would come to an end...

Once again, I give my deepest thanks for your prayerful and financial support for my ministry as a United Methodist missionary. I look forward to staying in touch, and sharing with you updates and stories from Ukraine over the coming years.

May God bless you and your loved ones in this season of thanksgiving.

Yours in Christ,

John

Rev. John Calhoun

Coordinator of International Ministries, Kyiv, Ukraine

OUR CHURCH MISSION...

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.



CANDLES in the WINDOWS



Given by....

The Spencer Family
Wayne & Rose Ann Myers
Millie Murray

Cathy Stock
Jim & Carol Watros
Madelyn Schmidt
Connie & Gary Day
Elaine DeLong & Family
Duane & Sue Morton
Mary Mack
Had & Linda Fravor
Duane & Sue Morton

Given by...

Richard & Darlene Buckley
Alan & Angela LaBoda
Sarah Mack & Family
Duane & Sue Morton
Esther Granger
Gorton Family
Jeffrey & Carol DeLong
Donna & Larry Woolson
Millie Murray
Sarah Mack & Family
George & Mary Grants
Had Hinman
James & Diane Sokolowski
Richard & Kathy Rose
Connie & Heather Kiesinger
George & Mary Grants
Terry & Karen Grimshaw
Dolores Anderson
Sarah Mack & Family

In Honor of...

Cathy Stock
Children & grandchildren
Cindy Hanley, Michelle Miller, Becky Riley, Jennifer Spaulding, Connie Day & their families
DJ, Liz & Noah Spencer
Family & friends
Grandchildren & great grandchildren
Jewell Foulz
Marge Perth
Our children, their spouses, & our grandchildren
Our family
Our family
The faith committees & groups in our church

In Loving Memory of...

Alex & Virginia Buckley
Ada, Michael, Walter, Elena
Alan Weatherby
Alfred & Eleanor Morton, Raymond & Hazel DeLong
Alice Robinson
Anne Gorton
Augusta Tubbs & Michael Cook
Beatrice Larobardiere
Bob Murray, Lewis & Ethel Robinson
Carroll Fox
Charles White
Dorothy McFee Hinman
Frank R. Baldwin
Frank, Mary, Doug, Linda Rose
Fred & Greg Kiesinger
Grace Grants
Grimshaw Family
Herbert Anderson
Hunter Fox

continued...

CANDLES in the WINDOWS cont.



Given by...

Ellen Nurse
Wife, Nancy Williams
Paul Vautrin
Ruth Greenway
Dr. Niles & Jonita Greenhouse
Connie & Gary Day
Richard & Darlene Buckley
Jim & Carol Watros
Had & Linda Fravor
Diane & Jim Barbur
Helen Southerden
Audra Sixberry
Rick & Les Sherman
Mary & Sue Loysen
John & Carol Aldrich
Gary & Ann Schipper
Paul Vautrin
Joan Phelps
John & Kathryn Myers
Gorton Family
Nancy & Miok Murray
Mike & Kelly Freihofer
David & Faith Hubbard
Wayne & Rose Ann Myers
Jeannette Spicer & family
Madelyn Schmidt
Gary & Ann Schipper
Mary Mack
Arlea Ackley O'Neil Farley
James & Diane Sokolowski
James & Diane Sokolowski
Terry & Karen Grimshaw
Dad, Mom, & Family

In Loving Memory of...

Jerry Nurse
Jimmie L. Williams
Jodi Lynn Vautrin
John Greenway
John & June DeLong
Karl Fultz
Leonard & Jessie Watkins
Loved ones
Maggie Glenister Wilcox
Marjorie Vautrin
Mary Babcock
Mr. & Mrs. Myers & Family
Norma Shortslef
Our loved ones
Our parents
Our parents, brothers, & cousin Jacalyn Ryan
Parents & grandparents
Paul Spicer
Ralph Schmidt
Raymond & Ada Glenister
Robert Mack
Rosanne Marie O'Neil Russ
William D. Sokolowski
Geraldine R. Sokolowski
Showers Family
Sean Finney Kugler, Linda Kugler Neely, &
David Mark Kugler