



# Methodist *Messenger*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | JENNINGS UMC |  
DECEMBER 2020

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

The year 2020 is almost gone and there is a great sigh of relief going up everywhere. We are now back to where we were 6 months ago being told to stay away from large crowds, wear our mask or face shields, wash our hands, and now we are in Flu Season. Life does continue and bad things will continue to happen to the best of us and the worst of us. Sickness and death is not concerned with our wealth or lack there-of, nor is it concerned with our spiritual faithfulness. No one is immune.

So here we find ourselves in the midst of a pandemic and trying to figure out how to prepare for the Season of Advent. November 29 was our first Sunday in Advent and as the song says, "now the waiting has begun." Our first Sunday was the Sunday of Hope which is what people everywhere need today. This Sunday is the day of expectation and joy. When we worship this month, we should have expectant hearts looking for all the many opportunities to worship and serve others wherever we find ourselves.

I heard it said that the saddest thing about the birth of Jesus was the people in the Inn missed the whole event because they likely did not look out their windows. I feel that we still do the same thing. We use excuses and say "if I had only known ahead of time . . ." We too miss opportunities every day because of distractions.

## December Worship

### **Dec 6<sup>th</sup>–Mark 1:1-8~Good News**

**Scripture Reader:** Eric Jeanise

**Prelude:** "God Will Make a Way"

**Hymn:** "Angels from the Realms of Glory"

**Anthem:** "How Great Our Joy"

**Praise Song:** "Gloria"

### **Dec 13<sup>th</sup>–John 1:6-8~Here Comes John**

**Scripture Reader:**

**Hymn:** "Away in a Manger"

**CANTATA:** Christmas Forever Amen

**Praise Song:** "Here I Am to Worship"

### **Dec 20<sup>th</sup>–Luke 1:26-38~Announcements**

**Scripture Reader:**

**Prelude:** "Adore Him"

**Hymn:** "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

**Anthem:** "The Virgin Mary Had a  
Baby Boy"

**Praise Song:** "Manger Song"

### **Dec 27<sup>th</sup>–Galatians 4:4-7~In Time**

**Scripture Reader:**

**Prelude:** "Emmanuel"

**Hymn:** "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"

**Anthem:** "This Child Is"

**Praise Song:** "We Adore You"

## From the Pastor's Desk Contd.

What if we all started a new tradition to help keep us focused on expectation? What if we all started lighting advent candles in our homes? What if we focused on Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace and began to prepare our hearts and minds on the true meaning of the season? I feel that we could make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of those around us. The Upper Room has some very good Advent readings for home use and I would encourage each of you to begin a tradition of making space for an Advent Wreath in your home and work for Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace for 2021.

My prayer is that as we get busy planning family traditions and celebrations that we also make time for our spiritual well-being and celebrate the presence of Christ in our midst. Watch and Prepare for what is to come. Be expectant and let Love and Peace reign. Watch for the LIGHT OF CHRIST this Christmas. Blessing and peace.

See you in church this Sunday,  
Walter  
Your pastor and friend

Isaiah 9:6

*"For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*



## Give a gift of life

**Be a Deer  
by**

**Being a Life-Saving Blood Donor**

**Jennings United Methodist Church  
Fellowship Hall**

**Sunday, December 13 • 10:00 AM - 1:30 PM**

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



**Your blood donation** will be provided to someone fighting cancer, sickle cell, a surgery patient, or an accident victim.

**Contact:**

**Laurie DeSoto LaCombe  
(337) 504-1501**

Donate & receive  
a Thankful T-Shirt  
while supplies last.

**LifeShare**  
BLOOD CENTER

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service:

Join us for Christmas Eve Candlelight service on Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. as we recount the Christmas story through Scripture and songs.



# YOUTH MINISTRY UPDATES

## December Calendar for Youth Ministries

December 13<sup>th</sup>-Christmas Caroling

December 20<sup>th</sup>- Christmas Party (Bring a wrapped \$10 Gift for game)

December 27<sup>th</sup>- No Youth meeting (celebrate with your family)

Our youth started our advent season by participating in the Christmas Program "Behind the Manger Scenes"; these youth and children literally practiced for 4 weeks before their performance. I am extremely proud of all their hard work. They really do bring the light of Christ into the church. My prayer this holiday season is for all my youth to stay healthy during everything going on in their lives. They really live in a world of uncertainty. Pray as we go forward into 2021 they can go back to some normalcy in their lives in the coming new year. May God bless all my youth and their families this holiday season. It is my pleasure to be able to serve these youth they are a true blessing to me!

Happy Holidays,

Crystal Benoit



January we will start a new Bible series entitled "The Comeback"

1. How to Turn Your Setbacks into Comebacks
2. What You Have Is All You Need
3. You Are Not Alone
4. Taking the Next Steps

# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY UPDATES

I want to first thank all the Jennings UMC church family for allowing our children and youth to share Behind the Manger Scenes with you. What a way to kick off Advent! But if you had only seen and heard the real "behind the scenes" action for this program...let me share a few with you. Our FOUR, yes, only 4 rehearsals were never dull. Laughter always permeated our time together. Did you know that our manger scene animals all had names? Let me share them with you: First you had "Brad" the donkey. Then there was "Sheila" the dove. Our two sheep were better known as "Shimmy" and "Shenay". From where these names derived, no one knows! 😊 And, then there was that rehearsal when one of our "wise ladies" knelt to offer Joseph his gift and instead proposed to him. Oh, there was no containing the laughter there. But wait, there's more...

Apparently during the Christmas pageant, as our 3 shepherds were in the midst of their quick change into the 3 wise men, they forgot their gifts! So, one of them took off down the hall to the costuming area, grabbed the gifts and began to take off to meet the others. That's when the fun began. Her costume sleeve caught on the door handle, the presents began to fly out of her hands, and one of them stubbed his toe when he tried to move quickly down the hall in an effort to "rescue" the gifts. The third one could not contain herself and had to share what happened as soon as she got on the set. So how would you as a character contain your laughter when told that the three wise men nearly forgot the gifts to bring Jesus? I don't know how she did it!

I wonder if our "behind the scenes" moments look something like this to God? Sometimes we, too, feel like we are wishing to remain behind the scenes. But what if God is calling you to be a part of something special? Something bigger? Oh, the joy you could miss by not allowing Him to use you to proclaim His glory and allow His light to shine in and through you!! Maybe your "behind the scenes" moments are where He is working. Indeed, this was a play like none other. And as my heart swells just sharing these thoughts with you, I am certain that God's heart smiled upon them, too. Thank you for sharing our sacred space with our youngest church members. Your warm acceptance of them has allowed them to willingly volunteer their time and efforts to share with you this Christmas!

This Advent has been difficult and beautiful all at once. I have seen such growth in all our children and youth. Sunday school lessons have offered beautiful moments of love and friendship as they gather around one space to learn more about God's greatest gift of love, that Gift whom we anxiously prepare and await during this season. As we begin to close the Chapter of 2020, please continue to pray for our children and youth. Your prayers and support make a difference in their lives. Your love is a gift that keeps giving. And, if you feel the prompting to be a part of some "behind the scenes" moments in their lives, come join us some time. We would love to have you as a part of these precious times.

As we move into our season of Advent, prayerfully consider how and where God can use you. Don't forget, you may think that you are remaining "behind the scenes", but God works there, too!

May God bless you and yours this Christmas!  
Sarah Crochet

This month, our children and youth began a new series for Sunday school titled "Unfrozen". Through this series, they will discuss the following:

- \*The prophets told of the coming King to give the people hope.
- \*The story of Christmas – of Jesus' birth – is too important to keep to ourselves.
- \*Even when we are afraid, God loves and cares for us.
- \*The Kingdom of Jesus Christ is for all people, everywhere.

Check out the series outline to the right. Below are some pictures from our combined class the week before Thanksgiving. It was great fun making Thanksgiving Gobble Gratitude turkeys!



## UNFROZEN SERIES OUTLINE

### Week One: Frozen Hearts

#### Isaiah 9:2-7. Isaiah tells of the coming King.

The once great Kingdom of Israel is divided and in shambles, and the people of God are discouraged and without hope. In the midst of this, God speaks through prophets – men and women like Isaiah – to remind them of God's love. Isaiah tells the people that one day God will establish a new kingdom that has no end. He will bring them a new king that will save the people: not only from their enemies, but also from their own sin.

### Week Two: Let Us Go

#### Luke 2:1-20. Shepherds Visit the Newborn King

For a King, Jesus was born in pretty humble surroundings; because his kingdom wasn't just for the rich and powerful, it was for all people. Some of the first people to meet Jesus – the shepherds – weren't rich or powerful, but they were transformed by their meeting with the new King. And the shepherds went on to tell many others about Jesus – just as we should.

### Week Three: Do You Want to Meet a Savior?

#### Matthew 2:1-13. The Magi Visit the Baby Jesus.

That first Christmas, not everyone was joyful. King Herod was an evil ruler, a man whose heart was dark and cold and turned away from God. When Magi came looking for the newborn King, Herod felt his position and power threatened. He crafted a plan to kill the baby. But God had other plans.

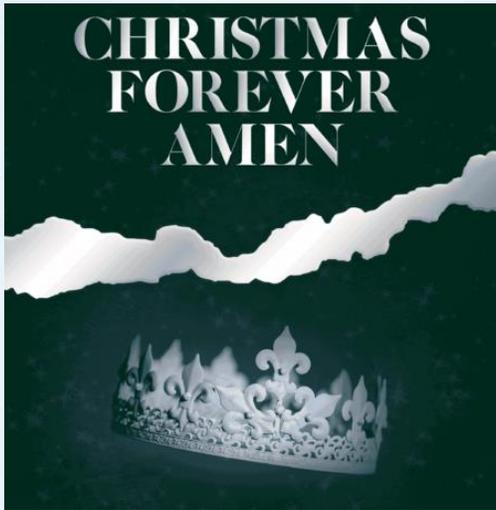
### Week Four: Love's Open Door

#### Luke 2:21-38. Mary and Joseph Bring Jesus to the Temple.

In keeping with custom, Joseph and Mary presented the baby Jesus at the temple. There they meet Simeon who has waited his whole life for the Messiah. He declares the new kingdom would not only be for the Jewish people, but Jesus would open the door for all the people of the world to be saved. Anna, a prophet who stayed at the temple day and night, meets Jesus and tells everyone about the one who would redeem the people.



# Music Ministry Updates...



It is so hard to believe we are finally nearing the end of the strangest year I have ever lived! I am sure that most of you can say the same. I have had moments of deep struggle throughout these past 8 months. However, praising God through music was my therapy.

Our choir has not been the same since COVID, but those who have been able to join us have blessed everyone! Each week was different. I cannot express just how wonderful to me is the thought of our choir loft being filled to praise our Lord! We are so excited to share with our church family on December 13<sup>th</sup>. To the right is the lyric to one of the most beautiful songs about Mary's servant heart. Mary, close to our daughters' ages, took on the role of mother of Jesus. She said, "Yes. Be it unto me." I can only pray that my heart can one day near the dedication of Mary's heart.

In closing, I wanted to tell you about a couple of opportunities in our church's music ministry. First, weather and health provided, we will sing Christmas carols on the parking lot by Main St. for our hay-riders that attend the downtown Hot Chocolate with Santa activities. It is open to anyone who would like to join us in caroling for our community. This will take place Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. I will have more details as it gets closer to that day. Let me know if you have any questions regarding this activity.

Second, our choir had books, practice CDs, and performance tracks in our possession last spring when our lockdown took place. God willing, we will begin preparations for our Easter cantata sometime in January. Since we do not have to wait for books/CDs to arrive, please let me know if you would like one now.

Thank you JUMC and JUMC Chancel Choir for all your love and support! This year would not have been possible without it!! May the Lord bless you and keep you and yours this Advent, Christmas, and New Year Day!

In Christ,  
Sarah

## Labor of Love – Andrew Peterson

It was not a silent night  
There was blood on the ground  
You could hear a woman cry  
In the alleyways that night  
On the streets of David's town

And the stable was not clean  
And the cobblestones were cold  
And little Mary full of grace  
With the tears upon her face  
Had no mother's hand to hold

It was a labor of pain  
It was a cold sky above  
But for the girl on the ground in the dark  
With every beat of her beautiful heart  
It was a labor of love

Noble Joseph by her side  
Callused hands and weary eyes  
There were no midwives to be found  
On the streets of David's town  
In the middle of the night

So he held her and he prayed  
Shafts of moonlight on his face  
But the baby in her womb  
He was the maker of the moon  
He was the Author of the faith  
That could make the mountains move

It was a labor of pain  
It was a cold sky above  
But for the girl on the ground in the dark  
With every beat of her beautiful heart  
It was a labor of love  
For little Mary full of grace  
With the tears upon her face  
It was a labor of love

## New Ladies' Bible Study Coming Jan 6<sup>th</sup>

Why should I have to be the one who forgives when I'm the one who has already suffered the most? We know God commands us to forgive. But how, when the hurt plays over and over in our mind? And why, when we have already suffered so much? And, are there exceptions, such as when the other person keeps inflicting pain?

Lysa TerKeurst has walked this journey, carrying so many wounds that felt unforgivable, that she at first refused to write these lessons! But after more than 1,000 hours of theological study, Lysa has discovered that Scripture not only offers the truth about forgiveness that our souls desperately need, but practical ways to let go of our bound-up resentment and finally heal. Lysa says about these sessions, "If you were to ask me, of all the Bible lessons I've taught, which are my favorites? These would be it."

In *Forgiving What You Can't Forget*, with deep empathy and therapeutic insight, Lysa helps us:

- Learn how to move on when the other person refuses to change and never says they're sorry.
- Walk through a step-by-step process to free yourself from the hurt of your past and feel less offended today.
- Discover what the Bible really says about forgiveness and the peace that comes from living it out right now.
- Identify what's stealing trust and vulnerability from your relationships so you can believe there is still good ahead.
- Disempower the triggers hijacking your emotions by embracing the two necessary parts of forgiveness.

If you have felt stuck in a cycle of unresolved pain, or resistant to forgiving people who aren't willing to make things right, you need the life-giving freedom that comes with learning how to forgive what you can't forget.

Sessions include:

What Am I Supposed to Do with All the Hurt?  
Your Mind, Your Mouth, Your Master  
The Divine Echo  
There's Always a Meanwhile  
The Compounding Effect of Unforgiveness  
This Isn't Easy, But It Is Good



Need a good laugh? Come join us on Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 7pm for a night of some much-needed laughter and fun, Christian fellowship. We will stream our show from fellowship hall. Bring a comfy lawn chair, some popcorn, hot chocolate, and an appetite for some great Christian comedy. I guarantee you will not be disappointed. However, I cannot promise that your abdominal muscles won't ache the next day! Contact Crystal or Sarah if you have any questions.

## New Ladies' Sunday School Study Coming January 3<sup>rd</sup>

Find the good news that brings hope and spiritual renewal.

We live in a world full of bad news. The media recounts stories of natural disasters, violence, and conflict. In the midst of all this heartbreak, we can't lose sight of the fact that God has given us good news. We call it the gospel. It reminds us that God loves us and longs to redeem our suffering. He stepped out of eternity and into time to send us His one and only Son. The gospel truths shared with the early church at Rome echo into our day, reminding us that we still have good news to embrace personally and to share with others. In this six-week study of the Book of Romans, we will be highlighting significant concepts regarding the good news about faith, grace, daily life, God's plan, relationships, and eternity. Whatever bad news we may receive, in Romans we will find good news to encourage and transform us.

Sessions include:

Introductory Video (14:20)  
Good News About Faith (25:43)  
Good News About Hope (25:39)  
Good News About Daily Life (28:02)

Good News About God's Plan (26:10)  
Good News About Relationships (23:43)  
Good News About Eternity (23:23)

