

First United Methodist Church Commerce

Volume 15, Issue 12

December 2017

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MERRY MARKETPLACE & LUNCH FOR MISSIONS COMMERCE

Saturday, December 2

10 am - 3 pm

**First United Methodist Church
1709 Hwy 24 in Commerce**



EAT! • ENJOY! • SHOP!

Homemade Stew & Cornbread
\$5 Per Person • \$10 Quart Jars To Go

Children's Choir Performs at Noon

Baked Goods & Other Delights
Antiques & Vintage Finds
Christmas Decorations & Gifts
Alternative Gifts

All Proceeds Go Directly To Missions In Commerce & Beyond



CHRISTMAS EVE Worship Schedule

Morning Services:

8:45am in the Chapel

10:50am in the Sanctuary

Evening Service:

5:30pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service



5th Sunday Combined Worship Service Sunday, December 31st 10am in the Sanctuary

The next 5th Sunday Combined Worship service is Sunday, December 31st. Our morning services will be worshipping together! Our order of worship will be a combination of both the 8:45 and 10:50 service styles. So, come and see your "friends from the other service" and enjoy our worship together!

Sunday schools are invited to begin at 9am!

Brought to you by The Worship Committee

Advent 2017 Poinsettias

Orders for poinsettias will be taken until Monday, December 11th. You may take them home after the December 24th Candlelight Worship Service.

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The Meaning of Advent by Dr. Gregory S. Neal

“Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”
(Isaiah 40:4-5)



The above passage from the book of the prophet Isaiah is a very famous one because it speaks about the power and presence of God’s glory transforming the world in every respect. No part of creation is left untouched by the presence of God in the incarnation. To put it simply, the coming of God into the world through Jesus changes everything.

This is the profession which Christians have always made about the Second Coming of Jesus: Christ’s return will usher in the new Heaven and the new Earth; sin and death, evil and wrong will all come to an end, and our lives, and all that we know, will be changed. This is the victory which Jesus’ crucifixion, death, and resurrection will bring to pass; this is the completion and perfection of God’s creation and its redemption; this is the essence of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is still to come, and yet is also already here, today, in the Church. To say that it is only something in the future is to deny that the Holy Spirit is active and present in the Body of Christ. While the Kingdom is neither perfect nor complete within the Church today, nevertheless we proclaim that the Church is a present-day foretaste and actual manifestation of the fully formed coming Kingdom of God.

The themes of the present and coming Kingdom of God, the presence of God with us in Jesus Christ, and his return in glory at the end of time, are all part of what Advent means.

“Huh? But I thought that Advent was a time of preparation for celebrating the Birth of Jesus!” It is, but it is also far more. If one looks at the readings which are appointed in the Lectionary for the four Sundays of Advent it becomes readily apparent that we begin the season with our attention focused upon our expectation for the Second Coming of Jesus. The readings deal with Jesus’ return, with the sudden appearance of “The King of Glory,” and with our duty to “remain awake and watchful” for his return. These messages of expectation for the Second Coming, and for the full and perfect establishment of the Kingdom of God, then give way to scriptures which focus our attention upon Jesus’ first coming as a baby in Bethlehem of Judea. So, during the first part of Advent we focus upon Jesus’ return in clouds of glory, and upon the current and future presence of the Kingdom of God; during the last part of Advent we focus upon Jesus’ original coming.

The word “Advent” (in Latin *adventus*) actually has its origins in the pre-Christian Roman practice of holding a celebratory feast on the anniversary of an Emperor’s rise to power. It was the “coming-to-reign” celebration, or the party marking each year of the Emperor’s rule. As such, it was an obvious term for the early Christians to adopt in celebrating the coming of our God and King, Jesus Christ, into the world and into his present Kingdom, the Church.

At first it was simply a time of celebration just prior to Christmas which, at its inception in the 300s AD, was a fairly minor feast day. By the 500s, however, Advent had grown into a period of 6 Sundays leading up to Christmas which, like Lent, had as its focus a period of quiet, interior reflection and spiritual preparation. By the beginning of the seventh century Pope Gregory the Great reduced the number of Sundays in Advent to four, while also increasing their importance as a period of celebration and preparation not just for the birth of the baby Jesus, but also for the Second Coming of Christ.

The color for clergy stoles, altar and pulpit paraments during Advent has historically been purple. Unlike the season of Lent, the purple of Advent is not that of penitence and forgiveness but, rather, the purple of royalty – of kingship and majesty. It reminds us that the birth of the Christ Child was the birth of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, so purple is appropriate for use during this important season. Another color, which has come into use among many Christians in recent decades, is blue: its adoption is intended to provide a visible reminder that Advent is not Lent, and that it should never be thought of as a time for mourning or penitence. Advent is, indeed, a time for preparation, but it is preparation for celebrating the arrival of our King, not for recognizing our culpability in his death.

During Advent one of the traditions which we enjoy, along with our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters and many other Protestants, is the lighting of the Advent wreath. The history of the Advent wreath is very ancient, reaching back to pre-Christian Northern Europe and the winter-worship practices of the Scandinavians. Prior to their conversion to Christianity, these peoples practiced the lighting of winter-solstice candles in their worship of the deity of light; in *(continued)*

The Meaning of Advent *(continued)*

their prayers they called for the return of the warm sun and for the coming of spring. They placed these candles on a greenery-covered wheel to symbolize the rotating wheel of the earth and the change of seasons. This practice was very popular and, hence, very hard to stop even after they became Christians. And, so, rather than attempting to eradicate the practice the Church did the next best thing: they Christianized these wreaths into instruments for Christmas preparation. This wasn't difficult to do, since Christ is proclaimed to be "the Light that came into the world" to drive away the darkness of sin and death and to shine forth truth and love. With each candle lit, the wreath helped to move the Church, Sunday by Sunday, toward the celebration of the nativity of Christ, the true Light of the world.

The four candles on the Advent wreath stand for the four weeks of the season. Traditionally, three of these candles are purple and one is rose. The purple candles symbolize the royalty of the coming King and our need to pray, prepare and, like Mary, ponder the significance of his birth. The rose candle stands for celebration at reaching the mid-point of the Advent season (for it should be lit not on the 4th Sunday, as is sometimes done in Protestant Churches, but on the 3rd Sunday). During recent decades it has become more and more common to dispense with the use of a rose candle and have all four of them purple; this is my preference, for each Sunday of Advent should be a time of preparation and rejoicing. In the center of the Advent wreath is the "Christ Candle" It is a reminder that Jesus truly is the Light of the world, and the Light of our lives.

This Advent and Christmas, let us rejoice in the presence of the Light of our Lord Jesus Christ in our lives, and let us share that Light with all whom we meet!

Worship

Sunday, December 3

Sunday, December 10

Sunday, December 17

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve Service

@ 5:30pm

Sunday, December 31

One Service @ 10:00am

8:45am ~ Chapel

10:50am ~ Sanctuary

6:00pm ~ Family

Ministry Center

Mid-Month Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, Dec. 13

5:30 pm in the Chapel

Come and be blessed by the prayers, the scriptures, the time of quiet contemplation, and the Sacrament of Holy Communion



FIRST THURSDAY

**Potluck Luncheon
December 7
@ 12pm**

Join us as we celebrate all FUMC members that are 90 years old or older!

**THE LIGHT
FUMC COMMERCE**

**Contemporary Service
Sundays @ 6pm**

**in the Family Ministry Center
Childcare & Sunday School available**

Come and enjoy the music and the Word

**Sunday, December 3rd
Monthly Potluck at 5pm ~ Worship at 6pm**

PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY

**Pastor's Bible Study
Tuesdays at 1pm**

in the Friendship Classroom.

We're working our way through the Book of Genesis. If you've not yet joined us, it's never too late to start!

There's always room for more!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

**from
your
Church Staff**

The First United Methodist Newsletter is the official publication of FUMC Commerce. The newsletter is published at the end of the month. Inputs may be submitted to the Church office to Bonnie Smith, Communications Specialist, at communications@fumccommerce.org, or call the office at 903-886-3220. Questions may be addressed to the Church office.

****The next deadline is Tuesday, December 12 by 9:00am****

A Word from Our New Contemporary Worship Leader

My name is Nevin Mark Jackson, and I am thrilled and grateful to join the staff of FUMC Commerce as the worship leader for The Light service! In my first month, I have been honored by your gracious welcome, and I look forward to meeting many of you in the future.



Since the time of the Apostles, music stirs our souls in ways that words alone cannot. In almost two decades as a church musician in both traditional and contemporary settings, I am constantly amazed and delighted by the power of music to draw us closer to God and each other. There is something about singing to God as a community of faith that strengthens us, whether we're singing the hymns that the Church has sung for centuries or the worship songs being written today. These songs help us give voice to our praise even as they teach us about who God is and what Christ can do in us and through us.

I am excited about the possibilities for The Light service to bring new people into our church, into fellowship with each other and with God. I invite you to come and see how the Spirit is moving on Sunday evenings in the Family Ministry Center. We are blessed to have talented musicians—Mitzi, Tyler, Ben, and Lindsey—and spirited, relevant teaching from our pastors, Dr. Greg and Brian. We are continuing to build community through traditions like our first Sunday potluck. On Sunday, December 3, we will share a holiday feast at 5:00 with turkey and all the fixings. Worship begins at 6:00, when we'll sing new and traditional songs for Advent, Dr. Greg will begin a new Advent series, and we'll share Holy Communion.

I hope to meet you soon, and from all of us at The Light, I wish you a meaningful Advent and a Merry Christmas!



We have new FUMC-C shirts for sale!

You can purchase your shirt for \$10 in the church office during the week or in the Gathering Area before and after Sunday services (details coming soon).



fumc-c children's council

The Children's Council would like to thank EVERYONE who donated candy and/or money to help us participate in our first Trunk or Treat! We were able to get our name and message out into the community by meeting, greeting, and giving out candy, stickers, and bookmarks to our Commerce kids. Not only that, we were a major candy supplier for the entire event. As the other organizations ran out of candy, we shared our abundant supply with them so that the kids could keep enjoying the festivities. Because of YOUR donations, we were able to keep the Trunk or Treat event going until the very end. We gave out our last pieces of candy at 7pm on the dot. Because of your generous support, this year's Trunk or Treat was the best yet! Thank you!!!



children's choir

- We will perform Christmas songs at the Merry Marketplace in the Family Ministries Center on Saturday, December 2nd at 12:00.
- We will perform our Christmas Program on Sunday, December 10 at 10:50 in the Sanctuary.



- * We had around 135 family members attend our Little Ark Thanksgiving Feast...our biggest crowd to date!
- * December 18-22 we will have a fun week of Christmas activities, including: Gingerbread man hunts, Polar Express Day, and Grinch Day!



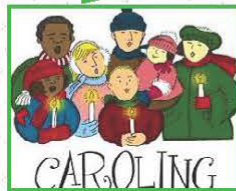
Children's Ministry

On Sunday, December 3, our children will visit The Compassion Experience, an interactive tour of life in the developing world at First Baptist Church in Sulphur Springs. They will experience an immersive exhibit that allows them to experience other cultures, the realities of global poverty, and learn how to change the life of a child living half a world away.

Our Children's Department will have a float in the Bois d'Arc Christmas Parade. Come out to see the parade and support our kids!



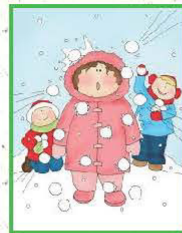
WHAT
Christmas
MEANS TO ME



Bois d'Arc Christmas Celebration & Parade

Saturday, December 2, 2017

downtown on the square



Celebration & Festival

begins at 2 p.m.

Vendors Food

Pictures With Santa

Fun Music

Parade

begins at 6 p.m.



MISSION
of the
MONTH

Proyecto Abrigo Mission Trip 2018!!! By Jan Helton

Calling ALL congregants! God needs YOU to be His hands and feet! Building God's kingdom on earth, our job as Christians, is life-changing and potentially life-saving. Join us for the experience of a lifetime!

As a church, we have ministered to the people of Proyecto Abrigo over the years by sending prescription bottles, medical supplies, helping two girls get an education, and by sending mission teams to build homes for the indigent and destitute. But it's been four years, so it's time to go again! Become a team member and/or help build the funding for the house, provide gifts for the children—soccer balls, coloring books, crayons, school supplies—but mainly we need YOU! Prayerfully consider being part of the team to make this journey, both physically and spiritually, from March 11-16, 2018. Yup. That's Spring Break 2018! What better way to spend it?!!!

The objective is to build a 12 x 24 foot concrete cinder block home for a family in need. Sounds simple, and it IS because it's made entirely by hand and entirely with love and a LOT of team work.

You're never too old or too young! God's work isn't restricted by age. Mission trip participant ages have ranged from 4 (yes, F-O-U-R years old) to the late 70s and older. Whole families have participated. There's plenty of His work for everyone regardless of age or ability. Sign up for more blessings than your heart can hold. Seriously.

"But," you say, "what's the cost for this phenomenal spiritual experience?" Glad you asked! Actual cost to you, the mission team member, is \$150 to defray the cost of the dormitory room and 3 meals a day at the compound. You would also need about \$50 extra for meals on the way down and the way home. We eat cheap: McDonald's, Subway, and CiCi's Pizza. What a bargain! You get all that great camaraderie with the team traveling together, breaking bread together, bunking together, working hard together, laughing and playing together, and the pièce de résistance—sharing in the first meal served in the family's new home: the Lord's Supper. The house is \$3200 to build. Funding comes from your generous donations spread over the months prior to the trip. Proyecto Abrigo is the Drop-a-Dollar recipient for December, so that makes it even better!



No passport yet? That adds a little more—right at \$135 which includes the application and fees. You can apply at our very own Commerce Public Library or do it online. It takes about 6-8 weeks turnaround time from application to receipt of your passport, so start now! More information is available from: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/information/fees.html>.

Need more information? Call Jan Helton: 903-450-7335 or email: jheltons@hotmail.com.

Please prayerfully consider reaping the rewards of being God's hands and feet. Matthew 25:40 states: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." And who can argue with that?!



The Angels Are Coming! The Angels Are Coming!

Believe it or not, 'tis the season when angels flock to our church as part of the Prison Ministries Fellowship Angel Tree Project, a ministry that FUMC-C has supported for 18 years.

If this endeavor touches your heart, you can help by:

- o adopting an angel and purchasing a gift on behalf of the incarcerated parent;
- o baking cookies/cupcakes for our party (Sunday, December 17 at 2-4pm);
- o donating materials for wrapping packages: boxes, gift bags, tissue paper, wrapping paper, tape, bows;
- o coming to our party and interacting with the families (Sunday, December 17 at 2-4pm);
- o praying for the children, their caregivers, and the incarcerated parent.

A Morning of Giving and Receiving Grace

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, we were blessed to distribute food baskets to 139 local families on behalf of Hunt County Shared Ministries - FISH and provide a pancake breakfast for the community. Volunteers came together to serve from our church family, the Wesleyan Campus Ministry, Omega Delta Phi, and Lions Athletics.



We also had the support of Texas A&M University - Commerce, which provided a forklift and volunteers to unload pallets of food, and of Fix & Feed and Brookshire's, which loaned us pallet jacks. Mark your calendar for December 16 when we distribute Christmas food baskets and host another pancake breakfast from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Volunteers are needed from 8 to 11 a.m. Contact Angela Roberts at 972.765.6547 to sign up to volunteer.

Community Thanksgiving Dinner

On Thanksgiving Day, about 180 people came together to enjoy a free traditional turkey dinner and share the day with others. Those who attended lingered after their meal to enjoy fellowship with those they knew and those they just met.



A HUGE thank you to all who worked to make this event a success!

To all who made Drop a Dollar donations to fund the meal. To the volunteers who made soup and pie for the dinner, the ladies of Mt. Moriah Church for preparing the sweet potatoes, to Brookshire's and Sodexo for their generous contributions to the meal. And to all the volunteers, who



came out Thanksgiving day to make the Community dinner a success. These folks decorated tables, worked in the kitchen to prepare food, cut and plated pies, packed to-go boxes for delivery, delivered those meals, greeted guests, manned the serving line and helped wash dishes and clean up. What a joy to see faith and service in action!



Saturday, December 16
Volunteer at Food Basket Distribution and Pancake Breakfast from 8 to 11am
(Distribution and Breakfast from 9 to 10:30am)

Contact Angela Roberts
at 972.765.6547 to volunteer.



YOUTH NEWS

Date	Time/ Location	Youth Event
Sunday, December 3	4-6P FUMC	Come and Join us for the Light Service and Pot Luck
Sunday, December 10	4-6P FUMC	Laser Tag and Bowling
Sunday, December 17	4-6P FUMC	Game Day
Sunday, December 24		Youth is canceled; enjoy time with your family
Sunday, December 31		Youth is canceled; enjoy time with your family

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Ad Council Chair:
Mike Roberts (903) 886-2142

Lay Leader:
Carole Walker (903) 886-4450

SPPRC Chair:
Jim Patton (903) 886-4612

Trustees Chair:
Virginia Collier (903) 367-7588

Finance Chair:
Gil Naizer (903) 886-1961

FUMC Foundation President:
Anne Mills (903) 217-2615

Connect Team Chair:
Susan Patton (903) 886-4612

Grow Team Chair:
Craig Jensen (903) 886-8713

Serve Team Chair:
Amy Stark (903) 246-1487

Lay Member:
Gene Lockhart (903) 886-3498



CISD Elementary Schools Coat Drive

The Commerce Community Action Program is partnering with Commerce Elementary and AC Williams schools to collect new or gently used coats for our CISD students without adequate winter outer wear. Donations will be collected Monday, December 4 and Tuesday, December 5 at Magnuson Hotel.

For more information, please contact Debbie Patterson at l.patterson@juno.com | 903-217-2593.

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Music Department
Organ Recital
Sunday, December 10 @ 2:00pm



The TAMUC Music Department would like to express their sincere appreciation to FUMC-Commerce for our generosity in allowing their organ students to have lessons and practice at our church.



Holiday Office Schedule

The church office will be closed

- *Monday, Dec. 25 through Thursday, Dec. 28 for Christmas
- *Monday, Jan. 1 and Tuesday, Jan. 2 for New Year's.



A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS
and Happy New Year!



**Luigi's Gives Back Sunday
December 17**

If you take your bulletin after church, Luigi's will send us 10%. Help support our church by eating some good food!

In memory of...

Mary Nell Roberts

By: Jim & Susan Patton

Harry Icenhower

By: Dennis & Judy Anderson

Ahtrell Dalton

By: Judy Rudoff

Glenna Julian

Dennis & Judy Anderson

Lucy Potts

By: Alice Sullivan

Terry & Barbara Smith

Norma Smith



Attendance

	<u>Early</u>	<u>Late</u>	<u>Light</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>Wed.</u>
Nov 5	30	87	32	64	
Nov 12	35	68	26	59	
Nov 15					8
Nov 19	32	72	22	51	
Nov 26	34	58	17	42	



**Financial Information
General Operating Fund**

	<u>as of October 31, 2017</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Income:	\$ 31,362	\$ 291,551
Expenses:	\$ 36,534	\$ 303,885
	-\$ 5,172	-\$ 12,334

Reading the Bible Daily



As you seek to grow closer to God through daily prayer and Bible study, you may have your own favorite daily readings. If not, you will find Scriptures for each day listed below. We hope you'll read daily and ask yourself: "How will I be different today because of what I just read?" Some other questions you might ask are: What does this text say about who God is?" "What does this text say about who I am/who we are as human beings?" "What does this text say about our relationship with God?" You may want to reflect on paper with a journal or note pad. We hope this will become a part of your daily prayer time.

Daily Scripture Readings:

Friday, Dec 1	1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Saturday, Dec 2	Mark 13:24-31
Sunday, Dec 3	Mark 13:32-37
Monday, Dec 4	Isaiah 40:1-8
Tuesday, Dec 5	Isaiah 40:3-11
Wednesday, Dec 6	Psalms 85:1-2, 8-9
Thursday, Dec 7	Psalms 85:8-13
Friday, Dec 8	2 Peter 3:8-15a
Saturday, Dec 9	Mark 1:1-6
Sunday, Dec 10	Mark 1:1-8
Monday, Dec 11	1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Tuesday, Dec 12	Psalms 126:1-6
Wednesday, Dec 13	John 1:6-8, 19-21
Thursday, Dec 14	Psalms 126:1-3 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Friday, Dec 15	Isaiah 61:1-4
Saturday, Dec 16	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Sunday, Dec 17	John 1:6-8, 19-28
Monday, Dec 18	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Tuesday, Dec 19	Luke 1:26-30
Wednesday, Dec 20	Luke 1:46b-55
Thursday, Dec 21	Luke 1:26-38
Friday, Dec 22	Romans 16:25-27
Saturday, Dec 23	Luke 1:26-38, 46b-55
Sunday, Dec 24	Luke 2:1-20
Monday, Dec 25	Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Tuesday, Dec 26	Psalms 148
Wednesday, Dec 27	Galatians 4:4-7
Thursday, Dec 28	Luke 2:22-40
Friday, Dec 29	Isaiah 52:7-10
Saturday, Dec 30	Psalms 98
Sunday, Dec 31	Hebrews 1:1-12



Prayer Lists

Recent Concerns

Family of Bill Crook (Laura Milligan's father)
 Roger Arnold
 Virginia Collier
 Corky Drinkard
 George McFarland
 Billy Stocker (JD Short's uncle)

Continued Prayers (long term)

Healing and peace for our hurting country and world, Debra Burton, Gene Casselberry, Martha Clevenger, Kenneth Cline (Tammy Naizer's father), Harold Coker, Garrett Cramer, Lois Cranford, Rev. Tom Dudley, his brother, and his niece, Gladys Gray, Preston Helton (Jan & Jeff Helton's grandson), Doris Kerbow, Loretta Kibler, Zachary Madden, Allen Martin, Harold McFarland (Julia Robinson's father), Carter McLeroy (Bob & Julie McLeroy's grandson), Betty Morton, Kyle Pollard (Judy Fane's Son), Robert Seay, Madeline Sullivan, Rev. Clay Yeager

Draughn's/Country Home Estate: Roger & Jean Arnold, Helen Cole, Joe and Mary Louise McMahan, Edna O'Quinn, Gayle Shumate, and Euple Walker

Oak Manor: Barbara Gish (Susan Lampe's mother)

Briarcliff: Jack Gray

Austin: Ruby Vander Velde

*"The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."
 James 5:16*

Help us hold each other in prayer by contacting the church office with new prayer concerns and updates on existing prayer requests.

If you have someone you would like to add or remove from the prayer list, please let the church office know (903-886-3220).



Remembering those serving in our military...

Lt. Dan Barton
 Daniel Chamberlain
 Mike Dempsey
 Josh Ham-Nadine & Clay Yeager's grandson-in-law
 Sgt. Stephen Smith & Denise Smith
 Col. Keith Williams
 Kris Yoder-John & Rebecca Sneed's son-in-law

To watch or listen to Dr. Neal's sermons online, go to:

www.revneal.org

www.youtube.com/revneal

www.facebook.com/RevNealVideo



Online Sermons



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office@fumcccommerce.org

**First United Methodist Church
 1709 Highway 24
 Commerce, TX 75428
 Senior Pastor - Dr. Gregory S. Neal**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE
 NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**
 Articles for the next newsletter are due
Tuesday, December 12 by 9:00am