



FOREST GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Messenger

December 2020

1726 Cedar St., Forest Grove, OR 97116-2434
e-mail: fgumc@teleport.com

Phone: 503-357-2689 FAX: 503-357-8410
website: www.umcforestgrove.org

Worship in December

As of November 29th, we have started a new liturgical year and entered the first season of the worship calendar: Advent. Advent - coming from the Latin *ad*, meaning "to," and *venire*, meaning "come" - is the four-week season of preparation for Christmas, the anticipation of the coming, the arrival, the advent of the Christ child. It is a time for reflection on the incarnation of Jesus Christ, Jesus "second" coming at the end of time, and the ways that Jesus is entering our world even in this moment. During this Advent, we will hear as the prophet Isaiah cries out for God to "tear open the heavens and come down" to set the world right.

We will examine what the Gospel of Mark has to say about the beginnings of Jesus's story. We will consider the role of John the Baptist as "a witness to testify to the light" of Jesus, the Word made flesh. And we will ponder the words of Jesus's mother, Mary, and explore what it means to live with generosity.

Christmas Eve we will celebrate a service of Lessons and Carols: a series of nine bible lessons interspersed with beloved carols, all telling the story of God's gracious intention for humanity and the miracle of God's gift of Jesus to the world.

Finally, on the first Sunday of the 12-day Christmas Season, we will reflect on the story of two prophets who recognize the Christ child when he is brought to the temple: Simeon and Anna.

If you would like to read one of the passages, contact Rhoda Fuentes.

Sunday November 29th 2020, First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 64:1-9
"Tear Open the Heavens"

Sunday December 6th 2020, Second Sunday of Advent
Mark 1:1-8
"The Beginning of the Good News"

Sunday December 13th 2020, Third Sunday of Advent
John 1:6-8, 19-28
"A Witness to Testify to the Light"

Sunday December 20th 2020, Fourth Sunday of Advent
Luke 1:26-38, 46a-55
"Quiltmaker God"

Thursday December 24th 2020, Christmas Eve
Lessons and Carols

Sunday December 27th 2020, The Third Day of Christmas
Luke 2:22-40
"My Eyes Have Seen Your Salvation"

Submitted by: *Pastor David*

CHRISTMAS BASKETS 2020

FGUMC will be distributing **Christmas Baskets This Year!** However, the format will be different (of course). We have 8-10 families on the list and will be providing gift cards to each family, \$100 per family, plus \$50 per family member (i.e. a family of 5 will receive a \$350 gift card from Walmart).

The gift will be distributed December 12th and will include a small basket decorated with ribbon, some candy, an ornament, the gift card and a letter from the church.

If you would like to contribute money please mail or drop off (mail slot in office) your donation to the church indicating the purpose.

Questions? Please contact the Christmas Basket committee: *Betty Pritchard, Janet Hummel, Doug Smith, Liz Swenson, Rhoda or Pastor David.*

Thank You.

Submitted by: *Janet Hummel*

CHRISTMAS COLORING

Dear FGUMC Family,

This is the time of year that I would normally stand up in church during announcements, use my "teacher voice" and say something like:

Good morning everyone. It is time again to color for Christmas. I want to cover these windows with more pictures than I ever have before. So **PLEASE CHOOSE** at least one picture to color, color it here or take it home and bring it back!

Well, this year is different. So, you'll just have to imagine my "teacher voice". And instead of having many pages to choose from I have provided 6 of the favorites from over the years. You can find them here: www.umcforestgrove.org/2020/11/21/christmas-coloring/. Please color one or many. Or if you have a picture of your own you would like to donate, you can.

Please have your completed pictures brought to or mailed to the church office by December 15th.

Thank you so much, and **Merry Christmas!**

Submitted by: *Cricket*

PASTOR'S PAGE

Dear Friends,

The decorations are already up, the Christmas songs are playing, and we are preparing for a Christmas unlike any other. I've heard people saying that the restrictions of COVID mean that we can focus on having a simpler Christmas this year. There won't be all of the travel. There won't be all the time shoulder-to-shoulder with people in crowded malls. There won't be program after program, party after party to attend. So in all of those senses, it will be simpler. And simpler can be good. Our Christmas seasons are often over-packed, so many activities and so much spending, that we lose any sense of what the season is about.

However, when I think about simplifying Christmas, of honing it down to its most essential parts, one of the most important things that I would want to keep is time spent with family and loved ones. I can do with fewer presents. I can't do without parties. While I would love to have in-person worship, we can make do this year with something different. The hardest thing to go without is gathering with family and dear friends.

I am heartened by the news that two promising vaccines are nearing release. There is hope. There is an end in sight. And I give thanks to God for the Herculean efforts of scientists, medical professionals, and public servants to work tirelessly for this important end. We can be very hopeful that a year from now, we will not be celebrating another COVID Christmas.

And so, we can do this. We can celebrate a very atypical Christmas. Some of the things we will miss - all of the rush-rush, hurry-hurry, spend-spend - we are better off without. And the things that we will miss most - Christmas Eve worship in the sanctuary, gathering with friends and family - we can endure, because we know that doing without these things for this one year could save tens or even hundreds of thousands of lives. It is not what we would choose, but with God's help, we have the strength to do it.

Advent is a time of waiting. We watch and wait for the coming of Christ. We remember the world-changing event of Jesus' birth, we look forward to the world-changing return of Jesus in glory, and we watch intently for all of the ways that Jesus comes into the world each and every day.

And Advent can be a kind of model for our season of pandemic. We are watching and waiting. We are anticipating a new world to come. And we know that when it comes, some things will return, but the world will never be the same. Our God is always making all things new.

During this very atypical holiday season, my prayers are with you and with your families. May you take joy in the simplicity of this season. May you find meaningful ways to safely connect with family and friends. And may God gift us all with the wonder of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the sure knowledge that whatever it is that we experience in this life, Jesus, Emmanuel, God-With-Us, experiences it with us. Thanks be to God.

Your servant in Christ,

+ Pastor David

Pastor David

FROM THE ALTAR TO THE WORLD

In this strange world of 2020, I thought I would share some Christmas memories of mine that at least on a personal level were on the odd side.

My family moved to Oregon in the late fall of 1948. I don't remember Christmas as such at all that year. We must have been settled in our house by then as we arrived in Albany on December 15. The main thing on everyone's mind was that my brother broke out in chicken pox on the last leg of the journey and there was wondering about when I would get them. All I know is that I missed starting school after Christmas vacation and that I wasn't as sick as my brother who always got really, really sick.

There were always floods to contend with in the North Albany area where we lived. This is an area off the Willamette River bridge out of downtown Albany and in Benton County. The final little road to our place had lots of dips and rises in it and water came rushing through many of those dips some years. One year that was a bad flood year we had guests coming from Seattle and a car couldn't get through on the final bit of the journey. Dad hooked up the flat bed trailer to the tractor and placed straw or hay bales for seating and drove out to collect our guests. If I remember correctly there was a baby in that family. No donkeys needed though.

There was another flood year when I was working in Springfield and the family lived in Sheridan. I left the church in a big hurry after Christmas eve service and made it home with no problems. Water was rising fast though.

Then there were the Costa Rica Peace Corps years 1965-67. The most evidence of Christmas were the Christmas cards decorating my room door. There were Costa Rican style tamales wrapped in banana leaves and tied in a little bundle about 3-4 inches square. There was no church in town so no religious service at all. The strange, but glorious thing, was that both Christmas Eve and Christmas night were celebrated with dances. Someone supposedly counted and said I danced 69 dances with 69 different fellows. I think that's suspicious data, but I had a lot of fun. No special meal other than the tamales, no Christmas music, no church services but I felt the ungathered community of Christians around the world celebrating Christmas in many unusual ways.

In the few short years, I was married to Larry Markus, Christmas was a mad scramble for my family, his family in Gaston and his family in Maple Valley, Washington. I don't remember whether we made all those stops in one day or if there was a second day of going to Maple Valley.

There was also the year that my brother's family was supporting a family from Southeast Asia. All I remember was that my dad's living room was about a foot deep with wrapping paper before all the gifts were unwrapped.

Whatever your Christmas practices and how they may be interrupted this year, I wish for you all the blessings that come with the Jesus who came to change the world one Christmas morning.

Blessed Christmas to all.

Reverend *Rhoda Pittman Fuentes*, Retired Deacon

“PEACE ON EARTH”

In December of 1968 I was in Viet Nam, serving as an infantryman with the 25th Infantry Division. My unit was in a forward fire base in South Viet Nam, near Cu Chi, and as it reached Christmas Eve, a 48-hour cease fire had been negotiated between the US and South Vietnamese forces and the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. It began at midnight on the 23rd and went through midnight of Christmas. It went according to plan and the hostilities ceased as arranged, it was weird and wonderful and abnormal. So many things were astonishing about those 48 hours, it was eerie for what was absent, especially at night.

The first thing was the quiet, generally there was always the noise of being in a combat area. There was constantly the loud noises of artillery, small arms, helicopters, tanks, APC's and aircraft overhead flying missions and reconnaissance. I had never known a quiet day or night since arriving in Viet Nam, sometimes the noise of battle was too close and threatening. But the entire day, especially Christmas Eve night, was silent! We were even reluctant to talk loudly so as not to break the silence.

Then there was the light at night, this was normally accompanied with the noise of battle. It was more like a constant glow in the night caused by flares and star shells fired from artillery or dropped by planes, meant to illuminate the presence and movement of the enemy at night. It was like having a bright streetlight right outside at all times. But not on this night, it was dark enough to see the brilliant stars in a dark blue sky.

What was normal was not on that Christmas Eve night. It stayed peaceful longer than planned, as if both sides were reluctant to begin their hostilities again. I think back on that time in Viet Nam, and picture that amid the noise and commotion and confusion at the time of Jesus' birth there must have been a time of quiet and wonderment at what was taking place for those who witnessed it, somewhat like I experienced that night in 1968.

With all the turmoil and clamor taking place in this season of celebration of the birth of Jesus, take a time out, have a cease fire, find a quiet place, look at the stars, and contemplate what the world witnessed on that night.

Peace and hope for all of you!

Submitted by: *Rev. Dexter Danielson* (Ret.)



INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE

Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.



St. Francis of Assisi



Dear Coordinators and Volunteers:

Thank you for your patience as the board has navigated a number of challenges since the onset of the COVID19 pandemic. As you can understand, the traditional church-host program was suspended, and we experienced the departure of our executive director and staff. But our commitment to serve families remains, and so much has happened since our last communication.

We are pleased to announce our new Interim Executive Director is Clarinda Hanson White. For over 28 years, Clarinda has worked with small and large nonprofits implementing strategies that empower staff and board to help their nonprofit reach its highest potential. She enjoys working as an interim director because she can bring a fresh perspective, new energy and a sense of possibility.

We are also in the process of doing a search for a Case Manager so that we can resume serving families experiencing homelessness. The probable model is to host families at a motel where a Case Manager will provide support, and where meals and resources can be offered. We are in conversation with near-by Family Promise affiliates to better serve families in Washington County.

The Day House remains in good condition and is currently being utilized by Project Homeless Connect as a day center on a short-term arrangement. Habitat for Humanity has agreed to support maintenance and repairs, and the Fire Marshall also toured the house and made safety suggestions. Our goal is to ensure a safe and functional home for families as the program is restored.

As you wait for information about the adapted program, here are ways that you can help: yard work at the day house (rake leaves, clean gutters, etc.) and submit donations for families (e.g., disposable diapers, wipes, etc.). We will update you on opportunities as needs arise.

Thank you for your continued care and support. Family Promise is only possible through your generosity and time. We appreciate your patience as we make progress toward resuming our mission to "End Homelessness – One Family at a Time." Please reach out if you have questions or suggestions.

With gratitude,

Brian Schimmel

Brian Schimmel
Board President
brianschimmel@gmail.com

Clarinda White

Clarinda White
Interim Executive Director
familypromisehillsboro@gmail.com

101 TIMELESS SONGS

Do you have 15 minutes to help me bring more music into the lives of seniors who may be experiencing more isolation due to COVID? Brea Murakami, my friend and colleague, and I are in the final stages of publishing our 101 Timeless Songs: A Music Resource for Beginning and Experienced Song Leaders need your input. We are asking you to rate a list of songs on how familiar and enjoyable they are to you. With your feedback, we will know which songs are the most well-known and beloved across all ages, making them the ones best suited to reach seniors who are needing care.

Well known and beloved songs are more likely to be sung, hummed, learned, and danced to, by all the caregivers, family, friends, volunteers, musicians, and music therapists, who are in contact with seniors living in facilities or are being cared for at home. Thank you again for your time and care in this matter! We, and all those whom we serve, appreciate it!

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdNIAe24lV48CbFLcZl77lY0Dn0PtX2sustjHTPu07OuWrLDQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Lisa Peterson, MT-BC

Come On, Let's Sing: Music Therapy Services
 Board Certified Music Therapist
 Oregon State Licensed Music Therapist
<http://comeonletssing.com> (cell) 503-901-6953



BIRTHDAYS

Shirley Gamble	December 3 rd
Laura Thompson-Aue	December 6 th
Sharon Adame	December 7 th
Ron Ray	December 7 th
Erma Heisler	December 10 th
Phillip Thompson-Aue	December 12 th
Lois Oakberg	December 19 th
Robbie Boles	December 23 rd
Krista Thompson-Aue	December 25 th
Bryan Gamble	December 26 th
Betty Ludlam	December 26 th
Shirley Peloquin	December 26 th
Patti Rose	December 28 th

ANNIVERSARIES

Chuck & Betty Pritchard	December 12 th
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HAVE YOU MOVED?

Please be sure that the church office has your new address as soon as possible. Thank you.

Submitted by: *Noelle Voepel*
 Church Administrative Assistant

CHURCH CORNER

MELISSA MIMIER KING

Melissa grew up in Bothell, Washington, before it grew contiguous with Seattle and before U. Washington set up its Fossil Campus there. Her dad worked for Seattle City Light; her mother was an elementary school teacher. Her aunt and grandmother were also teachers. Knowing how hard they worked, she decided teaching was not for her. When she graduated from Willamette U., she became a social worker with Child Protective Services, but her devotion to children convinced her she needed to teach. She earned a Masters in Education from Portland State and from Regis U. certification in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners – ESL.

The Kings met in church and married young. David says Melissa told him on their second date that she wanted to adopt children, but they were too young in their first six years of marriage to even begin the process. Then it took four years of being investigated and trying to be matched up for children before they were able to bring home 18 month-old Karthik from India. The tragic loss of their daughter and the difficult procedures led Melissa to give up on the whole idea, but David saw the video of beautiful 8 year-old twin sisters, also burdened with medical problems. Their caring experience with Karthik convinced the adoption worker within two weeks that they were the perfect adoptive parents for Kiahla and Kaylah.

The 2020 pandemic restrictions caused the Kings' support group "Mended Families" to curtail activities. Their move to FGUMC has been difficult since they cannot interact with new friends and parishioners in person, but Melissa has found fulfillment in on-line teaching. Loving and helping children is how she defines herself.

Submitted by: *M. J. Nordgren*

SERVING IN DECEMBER

Lay Leader	John Hayes
Altar Guild	Valerie Hawkins
Coffee Coordinator	Amy Scott
Nursery Supervisor	TBD
Kitchen Elves 6 th 13 th 20 th 27 th	Patty and Ed Davie

MISSION STATEMENT

Know God.
Build Community.
Impact the World.

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

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FOREST GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1726 Cedar Street, Forest Grove, OR 97116-2434

Rev. Dr. David King	1-541-399-9020	Pastor
Rhoda Fuentes	503-357-3998	Deacon
Noelle Voepel	503-357-2689	Administrative Assistant
Church Office Hours, Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (currently closed)		
Ed Davie	503-357-3185	Publisher
Please send your articles to me by the 18 th of each month! e-mail: edavie@frontier.com		