



For His Glory

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | TROY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | DECEMBER 2022

From Pastor David

If you haven't been able to join in worship since the beginning of Advent, our sermon series is called Christmas People. We're focusing on the people who lived the first Christmas story and how they were told about Jesus and responded to Jesus coming to the world, and how we can grow in Christ and welcome Him into our lives by our response. We've already talked about Zechariah and Elizabeth, and Mary. We're going to look at Joseph, Herod, the Inn Keeper on Christmas Eve, Jesus on Christmas Day, Simeon and Anna, and finally the Wise Men. We hope that you'll join us as we worship and welcome Jesus into our world.

One thing that's stuck out to me over the last two weeks of our Christmas People sermon series is a part of the message that Gabriel gave to Zechariah and Mary regarding the birth of their respective sons. Each birth was an impossibility, according to human standards. Zechariah and Elizabeth had been trying to conceive for years in vain and now Elizabeth had (most likely) been through menopause and really couldn't get pregnant. Mary was a virgin. Each who talked to Gabriel questioned how what he was saying could happen. I love how Gabriel responds to Mary when he tells her, "For nothing will be impossible with God."

I don't know how often we really focus on the impossibility of the Christmas story. Even writing this article, in the first draft of the previous sentence I wrote improbability instead of impossibility. We really don't like dealing with impossibilities. After all, why should we? If something is impossible why would we use our effort, energy, time, and resources trying to change something that can't be changed? Yet, the Christmas story begins with two impossibilities, and we are reminded that God is not constrained by human impossibilities.

From Pastor David {continued}

Now, it can be easy to misread Gabriel's statement to Mary as saying that as long as we believe and have enough faith, we can get anything we want from God. Rather, Gabriel is reminding Mary, and us through the ages, that when God has a plan and wants us to participate in the plan, things we believe to be impossible will not be. This is not carte blanche to try and get what we want from God, but is rather a statement and promise of God's authority and sovereignty over all things.

So, to begin the Christmas story we have impossibility. The coming of Jesus is the sign of hope that God is making all things new. Our lives and our world are included in that list, if we give them over to God.

Questions to ponder:

1. What obstacle in life do you see as impossible?
2. How does this obstacle stand in the way of God's kingdom revealed in Christ?
3. How is the Holy Spirit calling you to face what would be impossible without Jesus

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We've entered into the Advent and Christmas season, and even though December has just begun, it'll be January before we know it! We want to keep some information on the forefront of everyone's minds as we approach the new year and the time that we will have a discernment vote as a congregation about remaining United Methodist or disaffiliating from the UMC.

First: we are still waiting on a date from our Church Conference, when the official vote will take place. The Conference will not be scheduling these meetings until after the January 15 deadline to submit requests to have a discernment vote. From what the Conference is stating, these meetings to vote will take place between mid January and mid February. As soon as we receive a date we will let everyone know!

Second: please, please, please take the opportunity to check your membership status. You can check the printed list on the clipboard at the back of the sanctuary or call the office and talk to Betty who can let you know if you are on the membership rolls. Even if you are 99.99% sure that you are a member of our church, please check your membership status. We will not be able to receive new members on the day of the vote! If you are not a member and would like to be, talk to Pastor David.

Finally: We are working on scheduling representatives from the Global Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church to come and speak to our congregation and answer any questions you may have. The first of these meetings will take place on Wednesday, January 4 at 6:00pm, Rev. Josh Pruett will be here representing the Global Methodist Church. Mark your calendar for this informational meeting.





Recently I had the opportunity to preach on the things that distract us from Jesus and that sermon has stuck with me as I begin approaching Advent, especially after I received an appointment call to Nolanville FUMC beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>. The planner in me took off making a list of the things that I need to do in Troy to allow for a smooth transition as I leave and those things I need to do to prepare for my transition to Nolanville. Amongst the planning for the appointment I was still in school and dealing with family and church responsibilities. My to-do list was distracting me from the wonder and preparation that comes from Advent. This was after I preached about distractions and what we need to do when we are distracted. So I am taking my advice and naming those distractions as listed above but I am also determined to stop allowing my to-do list to distract me from all that Advent offers me as I approach Christmas and the birth of Jesus.

So now that I have recognized that I am distracted and have named those distractions what am I going to do about it, especially since my to-do list has to get done and my focus is split between saying goodbye and preparing to start a new chapter in ministry? First, I am going to offer myself some grace and understanding because as I said in my sermon, it can be easy to get distracted when life happens. Second, I am going to be intentional about making room for things that connect me to God and the reason for Advent moving forward. Things like decorating the house for Christmas, watching Daniel be excited about Christmas and all the things that brings, attending the Community Christmas program to hear Jesus birth proclaimed, lead a Blue Christmas service which reminds me where my hope comes from even in the darkest night. Lastly, I am going to make room for the people who make this season special for me, my family, friends and my faith community. Advent in my opinion is best experienced surrounded by others who point me to Jesus. All of these things make Advent special for me.

So I ask you, what makes Advent special for you? What activities and relationships point you back toward the reason for Advent and away from being distracted by your to-do list, or the struggles in your life? Whatever those things are make room for them over the next four weeks. Whatever those things are make them a priority and give yourself permission to lay down something that is distracting and not preparing you to welcome Jesus on Christmas morning. When we put our focus on Jesus and God and their presence in our world, we are growing as disciples.

ShaShawna Bush  
Associate Pastor for Spiritual Formation



## Stephen Ministry

For more information about Stephen Ministry or to request a Stephen Minister please contact Associate Pastor ShaShawna Bush -254-541-5530 or [shashawna@troymethodist.org](mailto:shashawna@troymethodist.org)



### Blue Christmas

A Blue Christmas Service is designed for people suffering with pain, loss, isolation and grief in the Advent season. The service is often held on or around December 21st, the longest night of the year.

Please join us for this touching service.

Wednesday, December 21st at 6:00 pm



## Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Worship Times

Our Christmas Eve candlelight worship services will take place at 5:30 pm and 11:00 pm on Christmas Eve. We hope that you can join us in welcoming Jesus into our world!

We will meet for worship on Christmas Day at 10 am. Knowing that it is Christmas and many of us are spending time with family in the morning, we will not be meeting for LYFE Groups. We'll meet in the gym at 10 am for an informal time of worship around tables gathered as a family in Christ with praise to our Savior!



## Parsonage Open House

You're invited to join the Ray family at the parsonage on December 20th. We invite you to stop by anytime between 5pm and 7pm for a come and go party. We love the Christmas season and would like to welcome our church into our home and share a bit of Christmas Joy with one another. There'll be snack foods and Christmas treats. We hope that you'll be able to join us! The parsonage is located at 1105 Lower Troy Rd.







Troy United Methodist Church and Troy Assembly of God Church have been working together with the children from these churches and the community to put on a Christmas play. The community Christmas play will be at Troy High School Commons on December 18th at 6 pm.

**From Lisa Browning** - During the month of December we will be talking about Advent during Sunday School. The Advent calendars have been sent home with the children.

**From Joey** - December Youth Calendar

4th - Bible Study and Games

11th - Youth Shopping Trip - Leave at 11 am and return at 6 pm

18th - Youth Christmas Party—4:30-6:00 pm

25th - No Youth



Join us Wednesday, December 14th

to go Christmas caroling!

We are meeting at 4:45 pm and leaving at 5:00.

Contact Joey for more information!

### **Attention All Youth!**

Mark your calendar for an evening of fun at the

Youth Christmas Party!

There will be a \$10 gift exchange, games and food!

Sunday, December 18th 4:30 - 6 pm

Contact Joey for more info!



There will be a youth shopping trip on December 11th. The youth will be leaving following the worship service and will return at 6 pm. They will be shopping for Toys For Tots.



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Tommy Valle
- 3 Michelle Jolliff, Nathan Maedgen,  
Kayla Sammons
- 4 Andrea Durbin, Anthony Medrano,  
Carol Land
- 6 Jeanie Kirk, Michael Dunsmoor
- 8 Morgan Richter
- 10 Marcus Ketcham
- 12 Cheryl Sanders
- 14 Lizzie Rurup
- 17 Matt Jarma
- 18 Cecilia Hudgens, Terry Martinez
- 19 BJ Finch, Richard Naser
- 23 Mary Knepp, Nick Olveda
- 24 Seth Rurup
- 26 Casey Pausewang
- 27 Stephanie Medrano
- 28 Scott Payne, Brett Payne, Avery Williams,  
Harper Payne
- 29 Ty Porter
- 30 David Walston
- 31 Karen Lindberg

## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 4 Eric & Stephanie Medrano
- 18 Tommy & Jennifer Valle
- 23 Tim & Janice Kirkscey
- 30 Matt & Phyllis Lynch, David & Mandi Ray
- 31 Chris & Lisa Browning



## ~ MEMORIALS ~

***In memory of Ricky Sanders*** by Richard & Betty Hester, Mike & Nancy Mercer, Tim & Janice Kirkscey, David & Nancy Holmes, Larry & Sarah Stewart, Barbara Thompson, Katherine Maedgen

***In memory of Will Kuehne*** by Larry & Sarah Stewart

***In memory of Jerry Long*** by Richard & Betty Hester