

THE SPIRE – ADVENT 2022 SPECIAL EDITION

MORRISTOWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FROM PASTOR LUANA

Dear Church Family,

What's a favorite Christmas memory you have from your childhood?

Was it a special ornament put up on a tree? Or maybe a traditional meal with extended family? Or was it going to church and singing favorite hymns? Or maybe being told in hushed tones to listen to the story of the birth of God into our world?

This Advent our theme is *From Generation to Generation*. This theme will begin with the infancy narratives found in the gospels of Matthew and Luke and celebrate the ways the Christmas story has been told over and over again from generation to generation. This preparatory season will be filled with engaging worship, special events, special services, and weekly devotions. All of it is to prepare us for Christmas Eve when we receive the gift of the incarnation and get to tell the story for *this* generation! I'm so excited!

Blessings,

Pastor Luana

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF ADVENT @ MUMC

United Women in Faith Advent Event & Book Club

Reverse Advent Calendar

Christmas Caroling

Advent Devotional Discussions

Parsonage Open House

Blue Christmas Service

Advent Calendar

ADVENTure in Mission

Angel Tree

Decorating for Advent & Christmas

Sunday Adult Faith Formation Gathering

The Christmas Singers Concert

Staff Advent Traditions

A Guide to Worship during Advent and Christmas

Advent Adult Faith Formation

UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY IS NOVEMBER 28

The United Methodist Student Day celebration is a time when we celebrate our United Methodist students and receive an offering to provide scholarships for their college education. When you give to the United Methodist Student Day (UMSD) offering, your gifts support the Gift of Hope Scholarship program. Gift of Hope scholarships are awarded annually to deserving United Methodist students.

As a congregation we have been in prayer with students who are away at college. They are not always with us in person, but we know that we are still connected as the body of Christ. We give thanks for their leadership and pray for them to have what they need to do well and to go into the world equipped as agents of change.

On November 27, we will have an opportunity to lift up these students during worship. On United Methodist Student Day, we give thanks for who they are and the ways they are growing into strong leaders. We are mindful that many students struggle financially, spiritually, or emotionally. They are preparing themselves to face a world that in many ways is broken and hurting. Together we can support them and remove some of

their anxiety to make space for them to experience God's peace.

We will also join with other churches in the denomination to receive a special offering. While many young people have the privilege and resources to attend college, many others do not. On United Methodist Student Day, we will come together as a community to invest our resources in education.

We are indeed one body but investing in our individual members will take us to the next stage in building the beloved community. When you support United Methodist Student Day, you make it possible for students to change the world in the name of God's love—to live out their dreams for a better world.

We give thanks for the students of our faith community and remember them in prayer for a successful, stress-free end to their semester. May they know they are never far from our hearts and minds.

Ashe Gobin

Austin Puma

Brian Macaluso

Caroline Macaluso

Charles Lawrence

Danielle Long

Emily Ciprich

Genesis Gobin

HaYoung Kang

Jacqueline Quinn

Joo Ahn Kim

Lucas Miller

Nicolette Long

Samantha Schuetz

Sarah Quinn

Tommy Dinneney

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

A Reverse Advent calendar is one where you *give* instead of *receive*. We encourage everyone to collect a food item each day of Advent to support of the Interfaith Food Pantry. Bring your collected items to church on Christmas Eve!

December 1 – 1 box of cereal

December 2 – peanut butter

December 3 – canned tuna

December 4 – canned beans

December 5 – macaroni and cheese

December 6 – canned fruit

December 7 – instant potatoes

December 8 – hamburger helper

December 9 – canned soup

December 10 – applesauce

December 11 – canned vegetables

December 12 – package of rice

December 13 – canned meals (ravioli, hash, etc)

December 14 – shelf stable milk like Parmalat

- December 15 – 100% fruit juice
- December 16 – package of oatmeal
- December 17 – package of pasta
- December 18 – spaghetti sauce
- December 19 – canned chicken or salmon
- December 20 – box of tea bags
- December 21 – baby food
- December 22 – baby wipes
- December 23 – baby formula
- December 24 – boost or ensure

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DISCUSSION

Join Joo Ahn Kim each Sunday of Advent during Fellowship Hour to discuss the Advent devotional – *From Generation to Generation*. You can find Joo Ahn at the table with a blue tablecloth. The Advent devotional booklet will be available to you Sunday, November 27. This is a great opportunity to both support Joo Ahn in her supervised placement at Morristown UMC and to get to know her.

CAROLERS WELCOME!

Join your voice with the choir after service on Sunday, December 11 to record hymns for the online Christmas Service, and then have lunch together before heading out for caroling on the Green!

PARSONAGE OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, December 18, 1pm-3pm

12 Chimney Ridge Drive, Morristown

Light refreshments will be served.

Please note - there are two cats that live with the parsonage family. Please wear a sweater, as the windows will be opened slightly to circulate air.

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Thursday, December 1 at 6pm

As the holiday season begins, we acknowledge that sometimes it's hard to maintain the "joy of the season" when our hearts are heavy. Gather with us to pray and lament, to mourn the losses and griefs of the year, to let the tears flow for the hurting places in our own lives, as well as for our country and our world. Our Blue Christmas Service is a safe and sacred space to share

anguish, to plead with God to remember us, to pray for justice and restoration, even to hope against hope, through our doubts and tears and fears, that "God will set things right all over the earth."

DECORATING FOR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

by Kristin Moran, Worship Committee Coordinator

Volunteers are needed to help make our church sanctuary and surrounding space beautiful in an inspirational way for Christmas Sunday and the Advent Season leading up to it. Glenn Stubaus will be stepping down from his role as chief-ladder-climber and needs to pass this mantle on to another. We need 5 to 6 folks who have some strength, creativity, are fearless (some ladder climbing is involved for one of the tasks), a sense of humor and a desire to get to know their church counterparts in a less formal setting. NOTE: you do not have to have all of the qualities listed above, we are just hoping that we can get there as a whole group! To be strong, creative and fearless would make you a superhero, although we do have a few of those folks in our church community!

DETAILS: Friday, November 25th - 10:00-1:00 in Fellowship Hall and the Sanctuary.

If you are able to help, please contact Jean Stubaus at:
jstubaus@optonline.net.

ADVENTURE IN MISSION 2022

Alternative Gift Giving for Christmas

For over 30 years, Morristown UMC has offered ADVENTure in Mission, an opportunity to transform gift giving into a way to support the work of Christ in the world. Our options support both local and international mission ministries.

Look for the table in Fellowship Hall with the brochure of gift options starting December 4. Let the gift of giving help you celebrate a spirit-satisfying Christmas!

BRING A TURKEY TO CHURCH RESULTS

Morristown UMC donated 623 LBS. with our Bring a Turkey to Church Challenge for Interfaith Food Pantry Network. Thank you for your incredible generosity and support of this challenge. The Interfaith Food Pantry was thrilled with our donations that helped them get a head-start on their Thanksgiving Baskets.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Christmas Poinsettia Order Forms will be available starting November 27. All information will be in the bulletin and the emailed Sunday Spire.

STAFF ADVENT TRADITIONS

As we were putting together this special Advent edition of The Spire, the church staff started getting really excited for our personal Advent traditions. Here are some of the ways we mark Advent.

Dave White

After the family has all gone home, and the last of the turkey has been eaten, it's time to get myself ready for Advent!

I so enjoy this time of year! Putting our all sorts of decorations, some new, but a lot of old family stuff sure brings back a whole bunch of memories – all the good ones!

Having our church decorations up! WOW!! We have a beautiful church! I look forward to the Christmas Eve service. I would always bring my children and some nieces. As time has gone on, and children have become adults with their own children, I find myself coming by myself. And that's OK. The joy I receive at Christmas fills my old curmudgeon heart! (for most

of the year!)

Pastor Luana

I start preparing for Advent before Advent, but no matter when or where I start thinking about Advent and Christmas, I listen to a [recording](#) of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir singing *What Shall We Give to the Babe in the Manger?* And I listen to it over and over again.

This song gives me all the feels with swelling orchestral music, but also refocuses me on the Christmas message that we are to give our lives to Christ. The song literally asks *what we will give Jesus for his birthday and all the stages of his life?* Christmas has become such a commercial holiday, focused on spending money for gifts. The tradition of gift giving is from the Wise Men arriving with frankincense, myrrh, and gold. So, Jesus is the one who should be receiving gifts and it is important to focus on that. This song makes me ask: What will you give Jesus this year, Luana?

Now, before you call me a Debbie-Downer, I LOVE giving and receiving gifts too! The gifts the Magi brought Jesus showed they KNEW him. They recognized him as the fulfillment of prophecy. This influences me in my personal gift giving because who doesn't want, more than anything, a

meaningful and thoughtful gift that shows the giver deeply knows you?

I hope you have a centering tradition that gives you both joy and a fresh commitment to Emmanuel, God with us.

Blessed Advent to you!

Jack Scharf

My tradition has been to read an Advent Devotional each day of Advent. This year I have ordered [Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience](#) from Cokesbury.

Regina Heater

Advent is my favorite season! I actually observe an "Extended Advent", [following a Celtic tradition](#). This begins on November 15. I take the extra time to think about how I want to approach the "core four" weeks of Advent. It's really important for me to do this, so that no matter how challenging and busy the season is, I've got some touchstones to help me reorient. I have several Advent wreaths that Julia and I light together on Sunday evenings, for example. But the tradition I love the most is setting out my Nativity scenes. I have 6 or 7, and I set them up all over our apartment – but I never place Baby Jesus into the scene until after midnight on Christmas Eve – and the Magi don't get placed until January 6. This is a tradition my mom

brought us up with. It's so important to me that when I am traveling on Christmas, I take a Mary, Joseph, and Jesus with me to setup after we return from church. As for the Magi, they have been known to wander and turn up in all sorts of places as they follow the star. (Keep an eye on the Morristown UMC Facebook page and you might catch a glimpse of the Office Magi this year!) I also have a Nativity that I call the "Nativity of Awesome", which features the figurines you'd expect along with some "special guests" such as characters from Doctor Who, Rudolph, Alexander Hamilton, and some tiny lobsters á la the movie *Love Actually* and more. I mean, who wouldn't want to witness the Birth of Christ?

Need some ideas for creating Advent traditions of your own?

Sybil MacBeth's book

"The Season of the Nativity" is a great resource for all ages.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Sundays, Starting November 27

9am-10am, Wesley Room

Witness the life and ministry of Jesus Christ through the eyes of Mary.

This year, experience Advent and Christmas with the one who knew Jesus more intimately than anyone else—his mother, Mary. Imagine the pain she felt at the crucifixion, her pride as Jesus' ministry grew, and her unrestrained joy when she looked into his tiny face that fateful night in the stable. Adam Hamilton helps you witness the life of Jesus from Mary's unique perspective, starting at the very end and traveling back in time to the very beginning—the night of Christ's birth.

Facilitated by Jack Scharf

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

By Kristin Moran

The United Women in Faith (UWF) have 3 events planned for December that we would love to have you be a part of. They are the Advent Celebration, The Angel Tree, and a four week Advent Book Club Series.

The **Advent Celebration** will be a Saturday morning gathering for brunch, Christmas crafting, visiting and worship. The theme for the day is light and wonder, based on the book, *Joyful, The Surprising Power of Ordinary Things to Celebrate Extraordinary Happiness* by Ingrid Fetell Lee.

***DETAILS:** Saturday, December 3rd from 11:00-1:30 in the Church Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary. Brunch will be provided but please bring your own plate, set of silverware and cup to cut back on paper waste and protect our earth. Plus, please bring a glass jar that you would normally recycle for the craft.*

We will be organizing and decorating the **Angel Tree** again this year as part of our UWF's mission giving. Jane Rehmke has agreed to keep that together for us. The Angel Cards for all of the recipients will be available to take during the Advent Celebration on December 3rd and after Worship on December 4th. *All gifts are due back at the church no later than Sunday, December 18th at noon.* Volunteers to help sort the gifts on the 18th are always appreciated. Please watch for more details in the Sunday Bulletins and Spire or contact Jane Rehmke at: rehmkenj@aol.com.

The **book club meetings** for both November and December will be part of a 4 week Advent study. It will begin the Tuesday right after Thanksgiving and continue for a total of 4 Tuesdays. *The dates and times are: November 29th, December 6th, 13th, and the 20th, 7:00-9:00 PM.* We will meet in the Wesley Room at the church. A Zoom feature will be provided closer to the start date. The discussion will be led by Mary Ann Scharf and the book is *Book of Joy, Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams. Please either purchase the book or order it from the local Library. For additional information, please contact Mary Ann Scharf at: Scharfma@shu.edu. To plan ahead, the January book is: *She Came to Slay: The Life and Times of Harriet Tubman* by Erica Armstrong.

Thank you so much for considering and supporting these opportunities to grow and learn and please know that I am always available for your questions. Kristin Moran, Morankristin@gmail.com, 201-213-7779.

EARTH-AWARE

LEARN

On Sunday, October 9th *EarthAware* showed the award-winning Frontline and NPR investigative documentary "Plastic Wars" which detailed the fossil fuel industry's 50-year campaign to promote consumer recycling at a time when industry leaders knew that recycling would never solve the problem of disposable plastic. Today our oceans are filled with more disposed plastics than fish. By 2050 the fossil fuel industry expects to triple their production of plastics. Until the fossil fuel industry takes responsibility for the problem instead of claiming recycling is a problem for consumers, the plastic pollution problem will continue to escalate. Here is the link:

<https://www.pbs.org/video/plastic-wars-8wxame/>

ACT

Also, on October 9th *EarthAware* team members and members of the Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship demonstrated against the continuing development of fossil fuel plants which are producing increased atmospheric carbon which has already raised average world temperatures by a statistically significant 1 degree Celsius. Climate scientists have

stated that a 1.5-degree increase would have catastrophic, irreversible effects on the planet and its life forms.

EXPLORE

Explore the two key issues, **solidarity** and **accountability** that will be the central focus of COP 27, being held next month at Sharm EL Sheik, Egypt. Will the developed nations, like the US and China live up to their climate commitments to the poor nations, which currently are experiencing the brunt of our climate crisis. You can learn more at <https://www.wri.org/un-climate-change-conference-resource-hub/key-issues-cop27>

ASP 2023

The 2023 ASP Trip will be July 2-8. There is a team meeting January 15, 2023 at 12 Noon in the Youth Lounge. Come learn more about the trip and our planned fundraisers. All (adults, parents, & youth!) are encouraged to attend.

2023 RUMMAGE SALE

158-ish days until the Rummage Sale!

The Rummage Sale will be April 22, 26, and 29, 2023.

We will start accepting donations on March 1, 2023!

THE CHRISTMAS SINGERS CONCERT

Morristown United Methodist Church presents *The Christmas Singers*:

Thursday, December 15, 2022

at 12 noon

Free admission

Join us as we welcome our long-time friends, The Christmas Singers, to celebrate the season with festive songs!

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

November 27 | First Sunday of Advent

There's Room for Every Story - Isaiah 2:1-5

Family Theme: Isaiah's Words - Peace

December 4 | Second Sunday of Advent

God Meets Us In Our Fear and Creates Possibilities- Luke 1:26-38

Family Theme: The Annunciation - Possibilities

December 11 | Third Sunday of Advent

The Magnificat - We See God In One Another - Luke 1:46-55

Family Theme: Mary Visits Elizabeth - Magnificat

Bring your 2023 Giving Intentions to church today!

December 18 | Fourth Sunday of Advent

An Intergenerational and Interactive Expression of the Christmas Story

Family Theme: Jesus Is Born - Hope

Christmas Eve

7:30 pm - Traditional Candlelight Service

December 25 | Christmas Day

ONLINE Worship Service of Christmas Lessons and Carols

& IN-PERSON Acapella Communion Service at 10:30 am

January 1 | Epiphany Sunday

We Keep Seeking - Matthew 2:1-12

Family Theme: The Wise Men - Gifts

Throughout Advent, use the *From Generation to Generation Advent Devotional* for your prayer and meditation.

Hard copies are available at the church and can be mailed to you.

Join Joo-Ahn after worship each Sunday for discussion.