

**University United Methodist Church
3501 Patrick Street
Lake Charles, LA 70605**



2009 Advent Booklet

“Expecting a Baby, Expecting the King”

Advent prepares us to receive and celebrate anew the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As the world around is in a frenzy of decorating, shopping, and partying, it is all too easy to get caught up in the very secular holiday season. Most of us need to step back and reflect on the wonder of it all: that God should enter our world as a baby to claim it as his own and having offered us salvation through his death and resurrection, and life in His Spirit, promises to come again to reign.

Here in the church, we find the familiar routine of lighting Advent candles, the symbolic glory of Christ-centered decorations, and the wondrous songs, new and old, which fill our hearts with joy. Here, too, we are reminded that the one we worship came to serve and that we honor him best when serving is at the forefront of our lives.

No matter what is going on in your life, where you are in your faith journey, one finds in these seasons of preparation and celebration, the hope we need. Emmanuel, God is with us! And we and our world will never be the same.

My prayer for you is that, amid the numerous distractions of the world's celebration of the holidays, you will find these events helpful in focusing on the real reason for the season and our journey of faith, the Incarnation, the birth of God's own Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. May your faith be strengthened as we draw close to God and to one another until Jesus comes again in glory. Merry Christmas!!!

So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unending love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.—John 1:14 (NLT)

Charlie



Merry Christmas
From your staff:

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First Sunday of Advent – November 29

Sanctuary (8:30 a.m.) - Service with Communion

Safe Harbor (11:00 a.m.) - Service

“Christ Will Come Again” - Luke 21:25-36

We begin by looking toward the end. We ready ourselves for the return of the risen Lord as we prepare to celebrate his first coming as a babe in the manger. In the ritual for Holy Communion, we proclaim with the Church through the ages “Christ had died! Christ has risen! Christ will come again!” Why would we expect that?

Pet Show and Blessing of the Pets– 3:00 p.m.

Pets will be displayed (leashed or caged) outside Safe Harbor along the sidewalk. Awards will be presented in several categories. Prior to children’s choir practice (4:30 p.m.), Rev. Langford will bless the pets and a video will be watched.

Lighting the Tree of Loving Memories—Following children’s choir and supper (approximately 6:00 p.m.), we will gather in the Prayer Garden for a brief service of lighting the Tree of Loving Memories.

Wednesday, December 2

Primetimers in Safe Harbor at 11:00 a.m.

“Advent Conspiracy: Can Christmas Still Change the World?” is the Advent study Marj Robinson will be leading at 1:00 p.m. Rick McKinley and Chris Seay ask, “Tired of consumerism that has come to define Christmas?” During the four-week study, they will focus our attention of “four simple, but powerful concepts” which can help transform our relationship as we prepare for Christmas.



Opportunities as we begin the New Year

Apprentice Groups – Rev. Langford invites all to consider being a member of one of the small groups using James Bryan Smith’s *The Apprentice Series* (3 books each 9 sessions in length). *The Good and Beautiful God* will be the focus of the first groups (prior to Easter). *The Good and Beautiful Life* is the book used in the second groups (after Easter). *The Good and Beautiful Community* will provide the heart of the third groups (fall). Persons desiring to be in these groups must submit a one-page (written/typed) paper, explaining why they want to be a part of these groups aimed at helping us become more Christ-like, by January 6. More info is available at www.apprenticeofjesus.org or from Rev. Langford.

Wednesday Night Supper & Bible Study – Paul’s Letter to the Philippians will be the focus of a five-week Bible study beginning January 13. Rev. Langford will lead this interactive study of the epistle of joy after supper beginning with an overview on the 13th and covering a chapter each of the succeeding weeks.

Planning Retreat – On Saturday, January 23, the Church Council and the Ministry Teams (Celebrating, Congregational Life, Nurturing, and Outreach & Witness) will gather to consider and determine plans for the year. We will get to know each other better, get a sense of hopes and dreams, and seek listen for God’s leading. With a clearer sense of where we are headed, we will determine the budget for the year and dedicate ourselves to carrying out the ministry God has given us.

UMW Sunday – On January 24 at one service, we will have the privilege of hearing from Dawn Wright, co-director of our Uskitchitto Retreat Center, as we celebrate the work of the United Methodist Women. There is to be a gumbo take-out dinner following the service.



First Sunday of Christmas – December 27

Sanctuary (8:30 a.m.) Service

Safe Harbor (11:00 a.m.) Service

Bruce Wilson, a senior at Garrett-Evangelical United Methodist Seminary in Evanston (Chicago), Illinois, will be preaching.

Church Office Closed at Noon on December 31 and all day January 1

Second Sunday of Christmas – January 3

Sanctuary (8:30 a.m.) Service

Safe Harbor (11:00 a.m.) Service

“Cross, Flame, & Shepherd” - Ephesians 2:1-7

The first two symbols of our vision statement will be the focus of the first sermon of the year. What does it mean to be redeemed, known, and loved? How does that lead to our becoming redeeming?

Announcements

- The UMW and UMM Christmas Banquet will be held Saturday, December 12 at 11:30 in Safe Harbor. Bring covered dishes to share.
- UMW Executive Board Meeting December 3, 8:30 a.m. at Nell Hayes' home. Breakfast will be served.
- Stonerollers Banquet will be at the home of Nanette and Chris Chambers after the Safe Harbor service on Sunday, Dec. 13.
- The Church Office will be open until Noon on Thursday, Dec. 31 to receive contributions to the 2009 budget. Only those gifts received by this time or postmarked Dec. 31 or before, will be reported on your end-of-the year statement and deductible on your 2009 taxes.

Second Sunday of Advent – December 6

Sanctuary Service (8:30 a.m.)

Safe Harbor (11:00 a.m.) Service with Communion

“One Greater than John Is Coming” - Luke 3:1-6, 15-18

When it comes to preparing, no one was better at setting the stage than Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist. He caused such a stir baptizing Jews in the Jordan, that many wondered if he weren't the Messiah (Christ) they had longer for. He assured all, that one even greater was coming!

Messiah Sing In featuring Paul Groves at McNeese Bulber Auditorium at 3:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 10 - Caroling and Supper

Meet in Safe Harbor at 5:00 p.m. to go caroling to our homebound. We will have a supper, depart as teams to sing, and then return for dessert and fellowship.

Saturday, December 12—UMW/UMM Christmas Banquet in Safe Harbor at 11:30 a.m.

Help needed:

We will be lighting the Advent candles each Sunday (November 29—December 20) and the Christ Candle on Christmas Eve. If you and your friends or family would like to do this, let Marj (Sanctuary Service) or Charlie (Safe Harbor Service) know.



Third Sunday of Advent – December 13

Sanctuary (8:30 a.m.) Service

Safe Harbor (11:00 a.m.)

“Jumping for Joy” - Luke 1:39-45

After accepting the angel’s wondrous announcement, Mary traveled to see her relative, Elizabeth, who, though quite old, was carrying a miraculous child. When Mary arrived, Elizabeth greeted her with honor and great rejoicing. Even her unborn son jumped for joy within her.

Stonerollers Christmas Luncheon at the Chambers around 12:30 a.m.

Children’s Music Program and Dinner at 5:30 p.m. in Safe Harbor. Family and friends will gather in Safe Harbor to share a meal (covered-dish) and to hear our children sing “Angels We Have Heard on High.”

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 20

Special Sanctuary Service -10:00 a.m. (No Sunday School)

“Canticle of Joy” - Songs and carols, new and familiar interspersed with readings and the lighting of candles will lead us to the babe in the manger. The Chancel Choir will use this cantata, arranged by Joseph M. Martin with narration by Pamela Martin, to focus our attention and devotion on the true reason for the season.

Christmas Brunch—Immediately following the service (approximately 11:00 a.m.) there will be a covered-dish brunch in Safe Harbor. The church is furnishing ham, breakfast breads, and beverages.

Service of Hope and Remembrance—2:00 p.m. This is a special service for those who have experienced the death of a loved one. No matter how recent or how long ago the loss, the holidays can be very difficult. Join Rev. Langford for this meaningful time to remember and claim our hope of eternity.

Christmas Eve – December 24—Church Office closed

5:00 p.m. Contemporary Candlelight Communion Service in Safe Harbor

7:00 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Communion Service in the Sanctuary -“Come and See” – Luke 2:1-20

For hundreds of years, the Jews had been looking for the Messiah (Christ), a Savior. The announcement that this night he has come as a babe in a manger in nearby Bethlehem came to lowly shepherds. We, with them, are invited to come and see for ourselves God incarnate as a poor, innocent baby boy in a borrowed manger. Wonder of wonders! Our prayers are answered in him.

Friday, December 25 - Church Office Closed

Special Offerings and Giving

LA Methodist Children’s Home Offering—Sunday, December 20.

Tree of Loving Memories—specified for the SWLA Methodist Children’s Home, presently under construction north of Sulphur.

Fruit, Nuts, and Hard Candy Collection for Homebound—Sunday, December 13—Items brought to either service will be packaged during the Safe Harbor Service for delivery by Charlie during the week.

Sweets and Treats for those who serve—Sunday, Dec. 20—Boxes for these will be distributed at the services on the 13th and, when returned filled, we will take them to ER personnel, firemen, and policemen in the area.

Service Opportunities

Caroling to our homebound and elderly – meet at Safe Harbor at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 10. We’ll have supper together, go caroling, and return for dessert and fellowship.

Delivering sweets & treats to ERs, firemen, and policemen after the Christmas Brunch on Sunday, December 20.