



The Messenger

December 16, 2020
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Watching for the Light: Prose and Possibility

Rev. Paul L. Escamilla, Senior Pastor

With the alliteration of a poet, Emily Dickinson reminds us that there are two ways in which life can be lived—by prose, or in possibility. That is, we can move through life in a strictly pedestrian fashion, predicting and prescribing our way through our days, hedging against threats, meting out favors only of a reasonable sort. Or we can open our hearts and minds and lives in anticipation that at any given moment someone may say to us something as preposterous as “Behold, I bring you good news of great joy!” with the further possibility that at any given moment we may find ourselves speaking those same preposterous words to someone else.



We’ve been hearing from prophets all season long: Jesus (Mark 13), John (Mark 1), Mary, (Luke 1), and this coming Sunday, Isaiah 61. These prophets’ vision for a new world is as wide as the sky: a Savior to make all things right; the hungry fed, the overfilled sent away; broken hearts mended, the captives set free. These are among the prophets’ visions; these are the possibilities God has given them to share with a world that tends toward the prosaic while secretly watching, waiting for something extraordinary, something to dispel darkness and instill hope.

There is one other prophesy that deserves mention—further evidence of a class of prophets whose vision was possibility-blessed rather than prose-bound. Early in Isaiah we hear these words: A young woman shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel, that is, “God-with-us.” Nothing quite vaults the imagination from prose to possibility like being notified that God is about to be born.

The days of Advent as they lead us to Christmas are filled with messages about this particular possibility, the mystery and miracle that God is about to be born—in Bethlehem, and elsewhere, too—possibly in a heart near you. One can always hope, which is where it all seems to begin.

Grace and peace.

Monday, December 21
**Visiting the Manger
on the Longest Night**
4 p.m.-7 p.m. (outdoors)



Thursday, December 24
Christmas Eve by Candlelight
4 p.m. -7 p.m. (outdoors)
Christmas Eve worship online

Watching for the Light

Advent and Christmas at Laurel Heights



Watching for the Light

Come and See worship gatherings
Saturdays at 6 p.m. on our website and facebook
Sunday at 8:30 a.m. Zoom watch party ,
our website and facebook



Sunday morning Worship
11 a.m. service of worship will be livestreamed
on our website and facebook

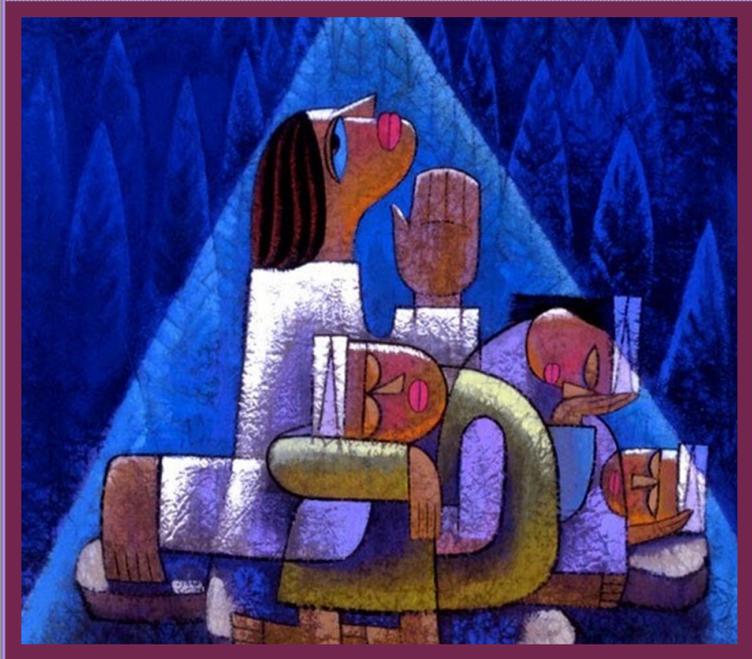
Family Advent Gatherings via Zoom
4 p.m.
four Sundays in Advent

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
is posted on
our website and facebook

Monday, December 21
Visiting the Manger on the Longest Night
4 p.m.-7 p.m. (outdoors)

Thursday, December 24
Christmas Eve
Christmas Eve by Candlelight 4 p.m. -7 p.m. (outdoors)
Christmas Eve worship online

*Come
and
See...*



Come and See What God Has Done

Week 4 of Advent

Advent is inching us ever closer to Christmas and hopefully you are experiencing the growing joy of anticipation. This week as you're watching, preparing, and lighting the way we invite you to the MIRACLE that is Immanuel, God with US!

Personally, the *Come and See* experience has been reminding me of the joy of teamwork, or in other words, the fact that I am not alone. The team of seven women who lovingly labor to make this series possible reminds me of Mary's willingness to say "YES" to an unknown path, just as we've all been called to do this year. There are many unknowns yet before us, but join with us for this week's message of the miracle of God choosing a willing woman to be the bearer of the Divine.

May you come in from the cold as your heart is warmed with us this season.

Blessings,

Wyndee Holbrook

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS DECEMBER 2020

Given By: **In Loving Memory Of:**
Karen Angelini ... Dinah Tanner
Betty BeckRonnie Beck
Jo Ann and Alexis BerainRonnie Beck
Blanche Birdsong.....Karen Birdsong
Cindy BirdwellHenry Birdwell
Cindy BirdwellLarry Thompson, Jr.
Cindy BirdwellLarry Thompson, Sr.
Cindy BirdwellSidney Mae Thompson
Janice and Bert Clayton.....Gloria Sparkman
Janice and Bert Clayton.....Marjorie Parrigan
Ellen EvansJohn Evans
Ellen Evans.....Dinah Tanner
Kitty GranthamDana Grantham
Sue HallWayne and Maxie McCoy
Sue HallIrma and Enrique Castro
Sue HallJanice Collins
Susan and Henry Holloway.....Talitha Holloway, our granddaughter
Elizabeth Hughes.....Rev Bill Hughes
Barbara Miller.....Mildred Donnell
Morton Family and Rush-Morton Family.....Diane Boehme
Morton family and Rush-Morton Family.....Marjorie Parrigan
Morton Family and Rush-Morton Family.....Beloved Family Members
Ann Wheeler.....Bill Wheeler and Winn Alley

Given By: **In Honor Of:**
Karen Angelini.....Aleene Block
Karen Angelini.....Bill and Ellen Myers
Blanche Birdsong.....Oran Birdsong
Walter, Jan, Ashley and Hailey Buehler.....William and Willa Jo Beuhler
Janice and Bert Clayton.....Kitty Grantham
Janice and Bert Clayton.....Richard Parrigan
Kitty Grantham.....Thurl and Carolyn Sims
Victoria Hartson.....Elizabeth Hartson
Susan and Henry Holloway.....Isabella, James, Sarah and Henry, our grandchildren
Elizabeth Hughes.....Loved Ones
Hannah Hughes.....Elizabeth Hughes
Ashley, Jeffrey, Jake and Birdie Landers.....Adi, age 6
Barbara MillerKathy Chandler
Morton Family and Rush-Morton Family.....Charlotte Rush-Morton

Notes from the Faith Journey



I have been thinking a lot about Faith Journeys lately, specifically about the three magis' journey. In our home's Nativity creche we intentionally place the three Kings a considerable distance from the stable, moving them closer and closer as Epiphany nears. Our kings' journey across the mantle has had me thinking.

Who were these wise men? We know very little about them. Were they really kings? More likely they were Magi or Magicians, Astronomers, Astrologists who would have been respected in their day. I wonder why we prefer to think they were rich and important kings rather than just wise men? They followed a star on faith, hoping it would lead them to something important. The journey was not easy; it probably took them years.

Their journey was long. That has struck me in this season of COVID. Our journey through the season has not been easy. The journey has taken much longer than we anticipated. We still have not found the place where the star has come to rest. Can we keep the magis' faith without knowing how or when it all will end? Endurance and patience are two words that come to mind. We need their faith, endurance and patience in the present to be able to make it to our own stable. Do not give up. Persevere. All words that must have been in the magis' minds as night after night they ploddingly followed the star.

The magi were wise men; they did not travel alone. Eventually they did find the Holy One, and then God led them home. We also are not alone through our journey; we have each other. In this season may we all be wise. Let us seek the Holy One together and seek the still voice of God on our journey home.

Ann McGlone





*Poinsettias
And
Prayers*



*Altar Guild and helpers
adorning the sanctuary
for Christmas.*



Giving to Laurel Heights

Online Gifts: Please visit our website,
<https://www.laurelheights.org/give/>

Text to Give:
Please text "LHUMC" to 73256.

Checks: Please mail to
LHUMC, Attn: Bookkeeper 227 W. Woodlawn, SATX, 78212.

Thank you, Laurel Heights, for your faithfulness in giving.

Memorial Gifts

General Memorial Fund

In memory of
Mary Gregor
Given by Lucille Dungan

In memory of
Marjorie Parrigan
Given by Paul and Trudy Kinnison

In memory of
Sidney Mae Thompson
Given by Paul and Trudy Kinnison

In memory of
Henry Birdwell
Given by Willa Jo and William Beuhler

Music Program Fund

In memory of
Orlin Hecox
Given by Thomas Kurt

In memory of
Marjorie Parrigan
Given by Thomas Kurtz

Sanctuary Pew Cushions

In memory of
Martha Hamil
Given by James and Mary Verette

General Memorial Fund

In memory of
Marjorie Parrigan
Given by Willa Jo and William Beuhler

In memory of
Marge Parrigan
Given by Carolyn Hieholzer

In memory of
Sidney Mae Thompson
Given by Paul and Trudy Kinnison

In memory of
Henry Birdwell
Given by Willa Jo and William Beuhler

End of Year Giving Tax Tips from the Stewardship Committee

If you are age 70 ½ or older and have an IRA

Individual Retirement Account (IRA) owners who are age 70 ½ or older can directly transfer up to \$100,000 annually from an IRA to a qualified charity, tax-free. This is called a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). Traditional IRA distributions are subject to federal income taxes and can increase your Social Security premiums for Medicare Part B and Part D. By having your IRA administrator transfer the money directly to a charity, you forgo paying taxes on the distribution and reduce your Social Security premiums.

If don't itemize (2020 only)

The CARES Act, passed in March to provide coronavirus relief, allows taxpayers to deduct cash donations to charity of up to \$300 on their 2020 federal tax return, even though they take the standard deduction.

Married-filing-jointly taxpayers do not get a bump to \$600, however. \$300 is the maximum above-the-line deduction per return.

If you want to give big (2020 only)

For those donors who are still able to itemize their deductions, and therefore directly write off gifts to charity, the current deduction cap is 60% of adjusted gross income. The CARES Act lifts this cap to 100% for individuals and joint filers for 2020 federal tax returns. It could theoretically mean zero taxable income if someone gives big.

Please consult a qualified tax advisor about your specific situation.

Wednesday Prayer Service

December 16 from 6:30-7:00 p.m.

Though scattered, we are gathered in prayer in the name of the One from whose love nothing can separate.

There are three ways to join the service:

Option 1:

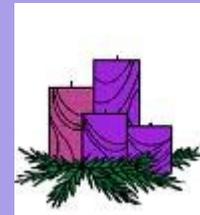
Click on this link: <https://www.zoom.us/j/130214408>

Option 2:

Download the Zoom app, click Join Meeting and enter the Meeting ID: 130 214 408

Option 3:

Call (346) 248-7799, and when prompted, enter the Meeting ID: 130 214 408



*A time to
to pray for one another
and the world...*

The Festival of Lessons and Carols
video is now on the church website



at <https://www.laurelheights.org/ministries/music/>



*Super Adults
All are Welcome!*

Thursday, December 17. 11 a.m.

Super Adults Celebrate Christmas

This will be another Drive Thru. We are asking for gifts of food for the "Food Bank." The need is great! You can pause awhile if you like. Santa Claus will be there to distribute some gifts to all who participate. We'll enjoy keyboard music by Geoffrey Waitt and Carolers.



Please bring: Cereal, Peanut Butter, Tuna, Beans, Rice, mac & Cheese, Chili & Soups, Baby Food & Diapers, Canned Lunch Meats and Pop Top Food Items.

Pick up your boxed lunch to go:

- Baked Christmas Ham
- Marinated Green Beans
- Fruit Salad
- Rolls
- Coconut Cake

Cost: \$6.00 - Reserve your plate or there won't be a lunch for you. (Sorry, times are tough.) Call 210-872-8031 to make a reservation.



**FIND
YOUR MISSION**



During this pandemic season and especially during this holiday season, finding a friendly face at the door will mean more than you can image to our neighbors!

Meals on Wheels San Antonio prepares and delivers nutritious meals each weekday to older and disabled individuals living throughout Bexar County. Every weekday in Bexar County Meals on Wheels prepares and delivers more than a meal to 3,400 neighbors.

You can volunteer to spread some holiday cheer or make a donation here.

<https://www.mowsatx.org/>



MEALS on WHEELS
SAN ANTONIO



Methodist Children's Home

Offering Hope Since 1890

LHUMC Mission of the Month - December 2020

Dear Friends,

Shop online at AmazonSmile and the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to Methodist Children's Home (MCH).

This Christmas, if you plan to shop online, consider supporting MCH while you do so. **Please note that MCH will only receive funds for purchases made through the AmazonSmile page, and not for purchases made through Amazon's main website.** So take the extra step and shop at AmazonSmile.

It's easy to do! Click [here](#) to begin shopping at AmazonSmile in support of MCH. Or, visit smile.amazon.com and type "Methodist Children's Home" into the search box. Be sure to select **our** organization, located in Waco, Texas.

On behalf of MCH, thank you for shopping with AmazonSmile this Christmas and throughout the year. We appreciate your support.

With thanks, **Kelly Lawson**, *Special Gifts Coordinator*



Methodist Children's Home

Offering Hope Since 1890

Since MCH was founded, friends like you have helped this ministry provide a loving, hopeful environment for children and youth. MCH annually serves more than 5,000 children from Texas and New Mexico through residential programs and transition services on our Waco campus and Boys Ranch, and through foster care and a variety of in-home and community based programs through MCH Family Outreach locations.

OUR VISION

We empower all we serve to experience life to the fullest.

OUR MISSION

We equip children, youth and families to flourish by offering hope through Christ-centered relationships, services and support.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

1111 Herring Ave. • Waco, TX 76708 • 254-753-0181 • 800-853-1272

[MCH.org](https://www.mch.org)



TUESDAYS
7:00PM - 8:30PM

via Zoom
Jan 12 - Apr 13

Leader: Katie Myers

Class Size is Limited.
Registration & Additional Details:
katiemyers@yahoo.com
(210)587-5498



Laurel Heights Online

Sunday Worship Livestream @ 11:00 a.m.



The livestream will be available for viewing at <https://www.laurelheights.org/online-worship/> and Facebook.com/LaurelHeightsUMC

Sunday School

Children's Sunday school videos can be viewed anytime at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/7425915/>
Adult Sunday school classes meet by Zoom.
Call (210) 974-1834 to find out more!



December 24—December 31

12/24

Nancy Jones

12/27

Janie Groves
Max Healy
Ashley Soli

12/28

Jill Caldwell
Dale Carver
Liz Hughes

12/29

Harper Shaw

12/30

Sam McGlone

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Healing: Adi (*Ashley Landers*), Betty Benson, Whit Birdsong (*Kitty Grantham*), Jeanne Coder, Gena, (*Thad Dorsey*), Marvin Gregory (*Carrie Clemens*), Eric Harvey family (*Mary Verette*), Annalynn Jackson, Lucien Manchester, Mary McGuire (*Mary Verette*), May O'Neal, David and Kim Parker (*Ashley Landers*), John Parsons, Margaret Persky, Thomas Sanders, Doug Semmes, David Semrad (former campus ministry director) Bill Shepard (*Janice Clayton*), Elise Townsend, Bob Walden.

Those who mourn:

Gerri Hurst on the death of her brother, Connie.

God's Presence: for our country, parents, teachers and students both face to face and remote, those affected by the COVID-19 virus and their families, as well as for the caregivers and researchers working to treat those affected and combat the spread of the disease; homebound members, the incarcerated, and women and men in our military.



Contact Us

To reach the office staff by phone, please call (210) 733-7156.

For an appointment with Yvonne Garcia, RN, our Wesley Nurse, please call (210) 272-7921.



Www.LaurelHeights.org

Lord, in your mercy, hear our PRAYER

You can offer a prayer of gratitude or concern by emailing prayers@mylhumc.org, through [Facebook Messenger](#), or calling the church office (210) 733-7156.