



# The Messenger

January 20, 2021  
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## **Returning**

Have you ever noticed that the Christmas stories include a lot of returning? A whole lot. Angels announce the Savior's birth to shepherds in the field, then *return* to the heavens from whence they came. The shepherds, having gone to see the Christ child in Bethlehem, *return* to tending their flocks. The magi, after paying homage to the child Jesus, *return* to their home countries. The holy family, having fled to Egypt to avoid Herod's wrath, later *return* to Galilee.

We might say that Christmas is a story of *turning* our attention toward a miraculous unfolding of history in the birth of the Christ child, then *re-turning* our attention to the places from which we've come. It is as though the Bible is setting up a pattern, a reminder, for us to carry our extraordinary experience of encountering the baby Jesus into the ordinary world of our daily lives.



Karon O'Ferrall has depicted this movement in a strikingly beautiful art piece displayed in the front hallway of the church building. The first panel depicts the magi traveling toward the Christ; the second, the holy family at the manger; the third, the silent, waiting world. In that vast and serene third panel Karon has depicted two things at once—the breadth of our calling (the whole world), and the goal of our calling (the world whole). With these three images, and the light of a special star illumining each and drawing them into unity, we find the same pattern of “encounter” and “return” presented in Scripture and reflected in the calendar of the Christian year. It is as though we journey from daily life to sacred encounter, then from sacred encounter back into daily life, now with sacred encounter on our minds.

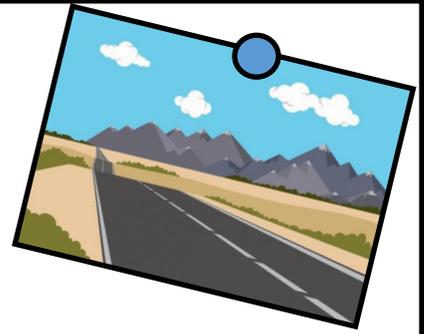
The mystic Howard Thurman, who was at the heart of the Civil Rights movement led by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., once wrote a poem that situates itself in the crossing over from panel two to panel three, from the holy family to the whole world, called “When the Song of the Angels is Stilled.” Here is an excerpt, paraphrased:

*When the song of the angels is stilled, when the shepherds have returned to their flocks, and the magi to their home countries . . . the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among nations, to make music in the heart.*

What is your work, and our work together, following the song of the angels? Where are the places of sacred encounter in the world beyond the sacred encounter at the Christmas manger? Pray with me for God to lead us there with gifts of healing, hope, and joy.

Grace and peace.

Notes from the  
Faith Journey



## The Journey of Faith

Austin, Texas 1962 Bert, my boyfriend (and future husband) and I stood in line in front of the Texas Theater on Guadalupe street, the Drag. When we approached the ticket booth, Bert said, "I want to buy two tickets. But will you allow everyone in this line to purchase a ticket?" "NO, only the whites are allowed in."

With that rejection, Bert and I turned around and walked to the end of the line. We were with thirty students, pastors, and other activists who gathered that Fall evening trying to integrate the commercial establishments in Austin. As we stood in line, we prayed, and sometimes we sang the famous civil rights anthem, "We Shall Overcome."

But there is another anthem, part of my United Methodist upbringing, that led me to the stand-in at the theater. It is "In Christ There Is No East or West," a poem that first appeared in 1908 written by British poet, John Oxenham.

J.R. Watson, literary scholar and hymnologist, views this poem/hymn as a rebuke of Rudyard Kipling's "The Ballad of East and West" which begins with the line, "Oh, East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet." In sharp contrast, Oxenham's poem rejects dominance and discrimination and affirms the worldwide communion of Christian love.

My heart is warmed every time I think of this stanza or sing the hymn:

*In Christ there is no east or west  
in him no south or north:  
but one great fellowship of love  
throughout the whole wide world.*

It means even more in my faith journey when I remember Oxenham's words and know that the poet captures Paul's message in Galatians 3:28:

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free,  
there is no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ.

In these difficult, tragic times, let us hold in our hearts the affirmation that we are wrapped in "one great fellowship of love," the love of Jesus Christ, "throughout the whole wide world."

*Janice Clayton*



## *All are Welcome!*

### **Thursday, January 28 – SUPER ADULT DAY**

As you may well expect there is not much in the way of gathering until we're rid of this pandemic. However, we can look forward to Thursday, January 28 for another meeting in the Woodlawn Parking Lot.

We'll gather at 11 o'clock to celebrate the Feast of the Three Kings. The traditional one in the gym was another victim of the "no large gatherings rule." Park your car on the lot, bring a chair to sit on in front of your car (do not congregate), or we'll have a chair for you. The Three Kings will circle the lot singing "We Three Kings." We'll all join in singing the refrain and the 1st and last verses.



Lunch will be  
Roast Beef Sandwich  
Relishes  
Chips  
King's Cake for Dessert  
Cost \$5.00



Even though, hopefully, we'll all have had our vaccine by then it will be necessary to wear a mask and practice social distancing. Please let us know you are coming so we have plenty of food.  
Call 210-872-8031.

## **LHUMC Mission of the Month - January 2021**

### **Guillermo Berman, Missionary**

Our Mission of the Month for January is Missionary Guillermo Berman. He directs the Manos Juntas Ministry which is a part of the Methodist Church of Mexico and ministers to people living near Reynosa and Matamoras. It is a multi-faceted ministry with ongoing projects to provide a better life for the people of Mexico.

Missionary Berman and Manos Juntas are supported by UMC Global Ministries and donations and volunteer teams from the United States and other countries.

You may donate to the Mission of the Month online at <https://www.laurelheights.org/give/>

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



## Wednesday Prayer Service

January 20

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 us.

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

OR

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...*



### General Fund

In memory of  
Rev. Malford Hierholzer  
Given by Carl Rohlf

In memory of  
Marjorie Parrigan  
Given by Samuel Creswell

In memory of  
Sidney Mae Thompson  
Given by Kelly Rainey

## Memorial Gifts

### Music Fund

In memory of  
Marjorie Parrigan  
Given by Johnny and  
Dorothy McClain

### General Fund

In memory of  
Larry Thompson, Jr.  
Given by Kelly Rainey

In memory of  
Sidney Mae Thompson  
Given by Theresa Ponce  
Rankin

In memory of  
Marjorie Parrigan  
Given by Elizabeth Hughes

## 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.*

*January 22—January 28*

**1/22**

Sarah Bodner  
Jim Moffett  
Douglas Semmes

**1/24**

Beeper Smith

**1/25**

Melinda Hartson

**1/26**

Laura Healy

**1/27**

Janice Clayton

**1/28**

May O'Neal



**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Healing:** Amy and Mike (*Aubrey Reichman*), Betty Benson, Whit Birdsong (*Kitty Grantham*), Jim Crews, Jeanne Coder, Flavio Garcia and family, Gena (*Thad Dorsey*), Marvin Huth, Annalynn Jackson, Ginna Lynd (*Liz Escamilla*), Lucien Manchester, Mr. Murphy, (*Stephanie's father*), Norma, May O'Neal, Doug Semmes, Erin Vaca and family, Bob Walden.

**God's Presence:** Kathy Chandler, David Shelden, Jr., 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.



*Lord, in your mercy, hear our PRAYER*

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



**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](http://www.LaurelHeights.org)