



# The Messenger

December 11, 2024  
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*A weekly publication of Laurel Heights United Methodist Church*

## Reflecting on The Festival of Lessons and Carols

King's College Cambridge held its first Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve in 1918 and began its broadcast ten years later. I, like many, tune in on Christmas Eve morning to listen to the ethereal service originating across a continent and ocean. While King's College canonized the service, it was not its originator. The author of Nine Lessons and Carols was the Bishop of Truro, Edward White Benson. In the late 1800s, churches across England experimented with combining scripture readings and Christmas carols into a Christmas Eve service. It was on December 24, 1880, in Cornwall, England that the Bishop Benson conducted his first Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols for the 400 people in attendance. After his appointment as the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Benson's Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols gained popularity across the British Isles. The first documented service held in the United States of America pre-dates the first one held at King's College—at Brown University in Rhode Island in 1916. After the first radio broadcast of the King's College Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, many churches in the US adopted and adapted Lessons and Carols to fit their needs. The United Methodist Book of Worship outlines two options for holding a Lessons and Carols service—one with Nine (a traditional Christmas Eve service) and one with Seven (a more appropriate service for Advent).



*Lessons & Carols cont. on pg. 2*

Laurel Heights United Methodist Church has celebrated Lessons and Carols likely for as long as most current members can remember. While it is a beloved tradition within the Laurel Heights community, the reason behind having a Lessons and Carols service transcends tradition. It is the *why* that really matters. Why do we—Laurel Heights United Methodist Church—still sponsor a Lessons and Carols service, especially as the Christmas season becomes busier? Why do *YOU* still worship through Lessons and Carols? Please ponder these questions as you attend our annual Festival of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 15 at 7:00 pm (prelude begins at 6:30) in the sanctuary.

Dr. Melanie Randall

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/chapel/a-festival-of-nine-lessons-and-carols>

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nine\\_Lessons\\_and\\_Carols#:~:text=Nine%20Lessons%20and%20Carols%2C%20also,near%20Christmas%20Eve%20in%20England.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nine_Lessons_and_Carols#:~:text=Nine%20Lessons%20and%20Carols%2C%20also,near%20Christmas%20Eve%20in%20England.)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-liturgical-history-of-lessons-and-carols>

## Midweek Advent Meals and Worship Gatherings

### Wednesday, December 11 | 5:30 PM

We'll gather again for a shared meal, followed by an **Advent Spiral** in the gym. The Advent Spiral is a moving tradition that symbolizes the journey of Advent. Walking inward represents entering the quiet reflection of this season, while walking outward signifies carrying the light of hope into the world. Participants will carry an unlit candle set in an apple candle holder into the center of the spiral, lighting it from the central flame, and then place it along the evergreen path. Evergreens symbolize everlasting life, while the apple's seeds remind us of hidden potential and the promise of new beginnings. As we walk the spiral, we'll sing familiar Christmas carols, filling the space with hope and joy.



### Wednesday, December 18 | 5:30 PM

For our final gathering, we'll share a meal and participate in a **Blue Christmas Service**. Blue Christmas, often observed near the winter solstice, acknowledges the sadness or challenges that can accompany the season. In the gym, we'll have **interactive, self-guided stations** designed for quiet reflection. These stations will offer a chance to name and release lingering feelings of sadness or loss, creating space for healing and hope during the holidays.



# Christmas Poinsettias

We hope you will consider purchasing a poinsettia in memory of honor of someone special this year.

By purchasing a poinsettia for \$15 each, you will help fill our sanctuary with beautiful poinsettias on Sunday, December 15 as we start the holiday season with Lessons and Carols at 6:00pm.

To place your order, please fill out the order and submit with payment to the church office, via mail or in-person. You can order online <https://onrealm.org/LaurelHeightsUN/-/form/give> or scan the QR code below.

## Christmas Poinsettia Order Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Poinsettias \_\_\_\_\_ \$15.00 each

Please pay by check made payable to Laurel Heights UMC, Poinsettia in memo line

Mail to: Laurel Heights UMC

Attn: Bookkeeper, 227 W. Woodlawn Ave. San Antonio, TX 78212





# REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

1 Peanut Butter	2 Rice	3 Dried Beans	4 Mac & Cheese	5 Canned Chili
6 Canned Tuna/Chicken	7 Breakfast Cereal	8 Canned Fruit	9 Crackers	10 Oatmeal
11 Pasta	12 Pasta Sauce	13 Stuffing Mix	14 Instant Potatoes	15 Soup
16 Apple Sauce Cups	17 Canned Pinto Beans	18 Crackers	19 Canned Tomatoes	20 Cookies
21 Canned Green Beans	22 Canned Carrots/Corn	25 Find a box and add an item each day. Bring your completed box with you on Christmas Eve. Our boxes will be going to the San Antonio Food Bank.		
23 Cranberry Sauce	24 Canned Sweet Potatoes			



Laurel Heights UMC  
227 W. Woodlawn Ave. San Antonio, TX 78212





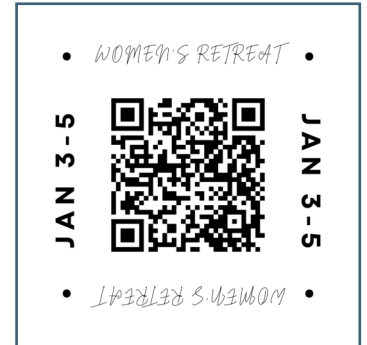
After the holidays, time for YOU!  
Rest, relax, & renew at the 2025 Women's Retreat!

JOIN US  
January 3-5, 2025  
Mustang Island Retreat Center

For more information, contact Laura Healy  
at 210-733-7156

Register at [Women's Retreat 2025 - Laurel Heights United Methodist Church](#) or scan the QR Code.

\$200 per person



Laurel Heights Young Family Calendar of Events

hello DECEMBER 2024

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- 7 Advent Dinners 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
- 7 Hanging of the Greens 2 PM - 4 PM
- Parents Night Out 4 PM - 7 PM
- 8 Youth Celebration 12 PM - 2 PM
- 14 CAM 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 15 Lessons and Carols 7 PM - 9 PM
- 24 Christmas Eve Services 11:00 AM, 7:00 PM, 11:00 PM
- 29 Church wide POTLUCK 12:15 PM - 1:30 PM

Laurel Heights Aug

YOUTH

Sept

Oct

**What's Next?**  
Youth Group: 11/17 & 12/8 12PM - 2PM  
CAM: 12/14  
MidWinter Retreat 2/21-2/23

For more information contact Katie Myers (210)587-5498

## Church Calendar

### Wednesday, December 11

5:30 p.m. Midweek Advent Dinner: Advent Spiral  
*Fellowship Hall/ Gym*

7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal - *Sanctuary*

### Thursday, December 12

9:00 a.m. Church Mice

6:00 p.m. Tai Chi Class - *Room 312*

### Friday, December 13

9:00 a.m. Exercise Class - *Room 305*

### Saturday, December 14

9:00 a.m. Volunteer Opportunity @ Christian  
Assistance Ministry - 110 McCullough Ave.

### Sunday, December 15

9:00 a.m. Worship Service- *Sanctuary*

9:30 a.m. Fellowship - *Fellowship Hall*

10:00 a.m. Advent Study with Pastor Laura -  
*Mann Chapel*

10:00 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Worship Service - *Sanctuary*

6:30 p.m. Advent Lessons & Carols Prelude

7:00 p.m. Advent Lessons & Carols - *Sanctuary*

### Monday, December 16

9:00 a.m. Exercise Class - *Room 305*

### Tuesday, December 17

9:30 Staff Meeting - *Laurel Room*

5:30 p.m. Advent Study with Pastor Laura -  
*Mann Chapel*

### Wednesday, December 18

9:00 a.m. Exercise Class - *Room 305*

5:30 p.m. Midweek Advent Dinner:  
Blue Christmas - *Fellowship Hall/ Gym*

### Thursday, December 19

9:00 a.m. Church Mice

10:00 a.m. Super Adult Day - *Fellowship Hall*

6:00 p.m. Tai Chi Class - *Room 312*

### Friday, December 20

9:00 a.m. Exercise Class - *Room 305*

### Sunday, December 22

9:00 a.m. Worship Service- *Sanctuary*

9:30 a.m. Fellowship - *Fellowship Hall*

10:00 a.m. Advent Study with Pastor Laura -  
*Mann Chapel*

10:00 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Worship Service - *Sanctuary*

## Volunteer Opportunity

### Christian Assistance Ministry

110 McCullough Ave

Saturday, December 14, 2024

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

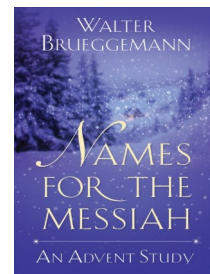
Join us on Sunday  
morning @ 10am in  
Mann Chapel.

December 15

December 22

Tuesday @ 5:30pm  
December 17

Please contact Pastor Laura to register.



## Christmas Eve Worship Services

11 am An Intergenerational Worship  
Service with communion and  
candlelight

7pm A Traditional Worship Service  
with familiar scriptures, carols,  
communion, and candlelight

11pm A Traditional Worship Service  
with familiar scriptures, carols,  
communion, and candlelight



# *Prayer Requests*

## JOYS AND CONCERNS

### *Healing*

Lucien Manchester

Richard Parrigan

Gracie Huron

Juan Arturo Gonzalez

William Beuhler

Pat Moss

Jay Sconyers

Brooke Herron

Glenda Sams

Bert Clayton

Ahmed Halim

Norman Roe



**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.



12/12  
Jed Dorsey

*Are we missing  
your name  
on the birthday list?*

12/14  
Ginnie Herrera

*Please notify the  
church office  
at 210-733-7156  
so we can update our  
records.*

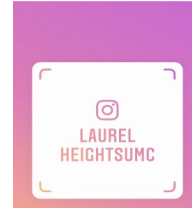
12/15  
Doris Pennington

12/8  
Stephen Hall  
Ann McAdams

*We don't want to miss  
anyone!*

12/19  
Byrd Bonner  
Steve Haney

## Follow Us On Social Media



<https://www.facebook.com/LaurelHeightsUMC>

**Sanctuary Offering**

**Online Giving**  
Please visit our website:  
<http://www.laurelheights.org/give/>

**Text to give:**  
"LHUMC" 73256

**Or use our QR code**

**MANY WAYS TO GIVE AT LAUREL HEIGHTS UMC**

<http://www.laurelheights.org/give/>

## Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday  
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



## Laurel Heights Staff

210-733-7156

Rev. Lisa Straus, Senior Pastor

Rev. Laura Healy, Associate Pastor

Laura Marty, Music Director

Dr. Melanie Randall, Assoc. Dir. of Music & Organist

Angie Taylor, Dir. of Young Family Ministries

Heather Weidenbach, Administrative Manager

Hannah Ortiz, Director of Communications

Debbie Cormier, Administrative Assistant (PT)

Susan Holloway, Super Adults Director

Yvonne Garcia, Wesley Nurse

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