

DECEMBER 2021

# THE EVANGEL

THE NEWSLETTER OF  AUDUBON PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON

*And other lies we love*

*"Everything happens for a reason." "God helps those who help themselves." "God won't give you more than you can handle."* They are simple phrases. They sound Christian – like something you might even find in the Bible. We've all heard these words. Maybe we've said them. They capture some element of truth – yet they also miss the point in very important ways.

Inspired by the best-selling book *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved* by Kate Bowler, our new sermon series explores these half truths and lies that we are tempted to believe as Christians.

*A new series beginning January 2nd. Worship with us **in-person at 9am & 11am** or **online at 11am** on Facebook, YouTube, or our website.*



**Rev. Geoff Helton**  
Lead Pastor

[geoff@audubonparkumc.org](mailto:geoff@audubonparkumc.org)  
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# FROM THE LEAD PASTOR

January is one of my favorite months! While the Christmas season is beautiful and meaningful it is also so very busy and full. In January, the weather often keeps us indoors forcing us to slow down and do less. I find I often need that at the start of the new year.

On of the things this slower pace allows is a chance for me to reflect on the current state of my faith and relationship with God. It's a good thing to occasionally check in with yourself and with God.

In many United Methodist churches, the first worship service of a new year is often a Wesleyan Covenant Renewal Service, a special worship service introduced by Wesley in 1775. In this service we reaffirm the Covenant between ourselves and God, and names the ways that we affirm and deny that relationship.

In the earliest years of Methodism, John Wesley and others found great meaning in Covenant Services, where they used a prayer from Richard Alleine, a 17th Century English Puritan. After one such service, Wesley celebrated God's work there in his Journal:

*"I do not know that ever we had a greater blessing. Afterwards many desired to return thanks, either for a sense of pardon, for full salvation, or for a fresh manifestation of His graces, healing all their backslidings."*

In the early years of Covenant Services, they would be conducted whenever John Wesley visited; later, Methodists joined this Covenant Prayer tradition to the New Year's tradition of Watch Night services; on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, faithful Methodists have been asked to affirm their covenant with God, keeping ready and watching for the coming of Christ.

The Covenant Prayer that Methodists have used since 1755 demands a lot of us. This is no simple act of praise, and no simple request for aid. In this prayer, we are all invited to commit our selves to the work of God, fully.

I'd encourage you take the time, as we begin the new year, to practice a particularly Methodist prayer tradition: renewing your covenant with God in prayer.

This year, I hope you might prepare yourself to pray this prayer, and then pray it in covenant with God as 2022 begins. I can only imagine what it might mean for our church community if we were all able to live these words fully and boldly, with the help of God.

## ***A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition***

*I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt,  
rank me with whom thou wilt.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,  
Exalted for thee or brought low for thee.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things  
to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O Glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
Let it be ratified in heaven.  
Amen.*



## **There's still time to give to the Christmas Offering!**

Each year we try to give away at least half of our Christmas Offering to ministries and organizations that make a difference in people's lives. This year we plan to support Twinlow Camp with half of our Christmas Offering.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has been particularly hard for on summer camps like Twinlow and they need our support to continue their vital mission of helping young people connect with God and each other.

**You can give to the Christmas Offering using the enclosed envelope or on our website: [audubonparkumc.org/give](https://audubonparkumc.org/give).**

*Grace & Peace*  
**-Pastor Geoff**

# YOUTH MINISTRY

If you have any questions about our youth group program please contact Drew Homchick for more info: [drew@audubonparkumc.org](mailto:drew@audubonparkumc.org)

## YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE

**Our Youth Group program (6th grade - 12th grade) will meet on Mondays from 6pm - 7:30pm at APUMC, unless otherwise stated.**

### GROG

**Monday, January 3rd | 6pm - 7:30pm**

Come join us for a night of running, hiding, and flashlights as we work together to defeat the mighty GROG.

### SOCCKER AND POLO

**Monday, January 10th | 6pm - 7:30pm**

We will meet downstairs for Soccer and Polo matches. Make sure to bring your running shoes!

### GAME NIGHT

**Monday, January 17th | 6pm - 7:30pm**

Bring your favorite card and board games as we join in fellowship for an evening of pizza and games.

### SNOW TUBING

**Sunday, January 23rd | TBD**

Come and join us as we head over to Bear Creek Lodge near Mt. Spokane for an afternoon of snowtubing. Please make sure to arrange for transportation to and from the event. Also, dress warm (winter coat, snow pants, boots, gloves, etc).

### ALL YOUTH EVENT

**Sunday, January 30th | 2pm - 3:30pm**

We will meet at Manito UMC (3220 S Grand Blvd, Spokane, WA 99223) and join other United Methodist youth groups in the area for an afternoon of activities, fellowship, and fun!

## SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Our Youth Sunday School program (6th grade - 12th grade) will meet downstairs in the youth room on **Sundays from 9am - 10am.**

## CHANGES TO THE CORE LEADERSHIP TEAM

We want to say a big thank you to **Claudia Biggs, Mike Cooper, Leslie Spitzer** and **Diane Strobeck** who are have all finished their terms serving on the Church's Core Leadership Team. We are thankful to them all for sharing their gifts with our church through leadership on the CLT!

We're excited to welcome **Jan Cooper** and **Vince Velonza** to the Team! Jan will lead the church's Personnel Team that works with Pastor Geoff to supervise and support the church staff. Vince will take leadership of the facilities team (Because he is related to a staff member, our office admin—Laura, he will not vote on personnel matters).

We are also thankful to our continuing CLT members: **Steve Cree, Jeff Johnson, Angie Patel, Karen Peacock, Linn Sampson (chair), and Olga Trunce (lay leader).**



Do you love working with your hands? Do you want to see our building be a welcoming and hospitable place for our church and our community?

Consider joining our Facility Team? Vince Velonza and Pastor Geoff will be pulling together a team to help care for and improve our building!

Be on the lookout for more information on our first meeting happening later in January. Reach out to Vince or Pastor Geoff to learn more.

# FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL CARE PASTOR



**Rev. Glenn Kennedy**

Associate Pastor of  
Congregational Care  
[glenn@audubonparkumc.org](mailto:glenn@audubonparkumc.org)

Dear Friends,

It's that season of the year when we spend a fair amount of time thinking about "gifts." Gifts come in all kinds, shapes, and sizes: some expected, some unexpected. Allow me to share a story about one of the special "unexpected" gifts that came into my life years ago.

It was the 1969-70 school year. I was studying theology at a Seminary in a small town near Lexington, KY. I was living in a tiny little house at the edge of town. It was Christmas break, but there was no break for me that year. I had papers to finish before the new Semester started when I would begin a very demanding six months in a Chaplaincy intern program.

It was an exceptionally cold night for that part of Kentucky, freezing actually. I was working late at night at my desk, and I kept hearing my screen door bang. I first thought it was the wind. Finally, I got up and looked. I couldn't open the screen door. It was blocked by a curled-up ball of black and white fur that didn't seem to want to move! The furball turned out to be a young border collie I later named "Charlie" after my grandfather. Charlie was about frozen stiff. He wasn't well; he could barely move.

Being the animal lover I was and am, I couldn't leave him there, and he wasn't able to get up and runoff. I gathered him up, found an old quilt, and fixed a bed for him behind the little oil-fired stove that sat in the middle of my living room. As Charlie began to thaw out, some life appeared to return in him. By the next day, I started deciding what to do with him. I checked all the normal places to see if anyone was missing a dog of his description...no luck. So, I had to make a decision. Keep him and try to bring him back to health or? I chose to keep him, at least long enough to get him healthy and adoptable. I would be leaving in the spring and wouldn't be able to take him with me, but I'd try to help him get well.

I would learn that Charlie's health needs were more than physical, and he had obviously been abused, as well as neglected. Every time I would pick up a broom, he would whimper and dive under my bed, scared to death he was in trouble.

Winter passed, spring came, and Charlie had begun to blossom into a confident, happy companion. He was a delight to come home to during the demanding, often difficult months of my internship. I had the joy of watching him learn to play like a normal dog. At times I was pretty sure I even saw laughter in his eyes. His recovery was as good for my soul as it was for his.

I am currently reading a book entitled "Honest Advent." The author reminds us that God's greatest gifts came to us not just through angels' songs and shimmering light but also through a young Jewish women's morning sickness, birth pangs, and an anxious, worried heart. That December night, when Charlie showed up on my front porch, I was pretty sure that I didn't have time, money, energy for a project like him, but he was the gift that was mine to live into. To receive the gift, I had to first open the door; the rest would follow.

That's what I would ask each of us this Advent/Christmas Season: Is there a door that needs to be opened or reopened for you to receive the gift that wants to be received, embraced, lived into just now in your life, even if it involves some morning sickness and birth pangs on your part? Charlie chose me that cold night many years ago. I opened the door and was blessed.



*God's Blessings*  
*Pastor Glenn*

# JANUARY

*For more information on church meetings or events,  
please see the church website:  
[audubonparkumc.org](http://audubonparkumc.org).*

## **Sunday, 1/2**

Camp Audubon Sunday School | 9 am  
Audubon Park In-person Service | 9 am & 11 am  
Audubon Park Online Worship | 11 am

## **Monday, 1/3**

Art Group | 9 am  
Bible Study Group | 11:30 am

## **Tuesday, 1/4**

Quilting Group | 9 am

## **Wednesday, 1/5**

Knitters | 1 pm

## **Sunday, 1/9**

Camp Audubon Sunday School | 9 am  
Audubon Park In-Person Service | 9 am & 11 am  
Audubon Park Online Worship | 11 am

## **Monday, 1/10**

Bible Study Group | 11:30 am

## **Tuesday, 1/11**

APUMC Food Bank | 8:30-11:30 pm  
Quilting Group | 9 am

## **Wednesday, 1/12**

Knitters | 1 pm

## **Friday, 1/14**

Stephen Ministry Meeting | 10 am

## **Sunday, 1/16**

Camp Audubon Sunday School | 9 am  
Audubon Park In-person Service | 9 am & 11 am  
Audubon Park Online Worship | 11 am

## **Monday, 1/17 - Martin Luther King Day Office Closed**

Art Group | 9 am  
Bible Study Group | 11:30 am

## **Tuesday, 1/18**

Quilting Group | 9 am

## **Wednesday, 1/19**

Knitters | 1 pm

## **Sunday, 1/23**

Camp Audubon Sunday School | 9 am  
Audubon Park In-Person Service | 9 am & 11 am  
Audubon Park Online Worship | 11 am

## **Monday, 1/24**

Bible Study Group | 11:30 am

## **Tuesday, 1/25**

AP Food Bank | 8:30-11:30 pm  
Quilting Group | 9 am

## **Wednesday, 1/26**

Knitters | 1 pm

## **Friday, 1/28**

Stephen Ministry Meeting | 10 am

## **Sunday, 1/30**

Camp Audubon Sunday School | 9 am  
Audubon Park In-person Service | 9 am & 11 am  
Audubon Park Online Worship | 11 am

## **Monday, 1/31**

Art Group | 9 am  
Bible Study Group | 11:30 am

## **Birthdays**

2 - Claudia Boswell  
6 - Fyrne Bemiller  
7 - Vi Nagley  
8 - Cole Strolberg  
9 - Aeryn Ostrander, Brent Smith  
10 - Bob Kem  
12 - Chris Moreau  
15 - Glenn Kennedy  
16 - Kathy Cottrell  
17 - Justin Burns, Marge Mero  
21 - Retta Nickell  
24 - David Payne  
25 - Rebecca Stolberg, Amy Payne, Ross Geiswhite  
28 - George Hartman

## **Anniversaries**

1 - Joe & Brenda Vasquez  
5 - Gene & Kate Raynaud



# **Audubon Park United Methodist Church**

3908 N. Driscoll Blvd., Spokane, WA 99205  
(509) 325-4541

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**SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**IN-PERSON** at **9AM & 11AM**  
**ONLINE** at **11AM**

**FOR MORE INFO GO TO:**  
**[audubonparkumc.org](http://audubonparkumc.org)**

**A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF**  **AUDUBON PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**