



The Steeple Story

Eastlawn United Methodist Church
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Happy New Year By Brother Jeff

Happy New Year! No, I'm not a month early. Advent is the beginning of the Christian calendar, so technically, the rest of the world is a month behind. We begin our new year by looking forward to the coming of Christ, and preparing our hearts accordingly.

New Year is typically a time of celebration, but if you're like me, the recent news about suspending in-person worship doesn't make you feel much like celebrating. After the first season of having to be apart last spring/summer, it was so great to be able to worship in the sanctuary together again. At least that part of life was starting to feel normal again. Sunday school classes and circles were starting to meet in person, youth and children were getting back to their activities, and it looked like we were going to be able to keep all that up.

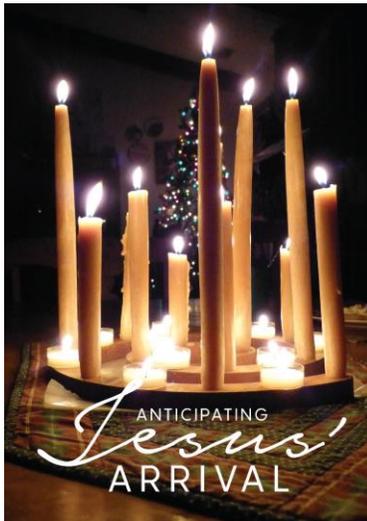
But here we go again, I guess. The Coronavirus statistics have continued to increase, and the state health department's recommendations have caused the Mississippi Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church to ask all of its churches to suspend all in-person gatherings, including worship, until further notice. It felt like a punch to the gut when I got the news.

Have you ever seen the movie, *Groundhog Day*? The one where Bill Murray gets trapped in time and has to repeat the same day all over again until he gets it right, and he wakes up every morning dreading having to go through it all again? That's how I felt

when I realized we were going to have to "go backwards" again.

But if you're following along with our daily Advent video devotional on Facebook, you know that Advent is the perfect season for a "Reset," which is exactly what this "setback" might offer us yet another opportunity for.

It's just like us to focus on the negative whenever there is a chance to complain or feel sorry for ourselves. Instead of focusing on the things we CAN'T do because of these new restrictions, though, we're going to focus on all the things we CAN do in spite of, and even because of our new situation.



Live worship and Bible study will continue. Prayer for one another will continue. Reaching out through phone calls and emails and letters will increase, as we all try to be more intentional about making sure everyone knows they are loved and missed.

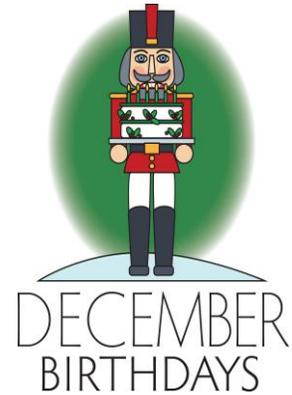
Hopefully, this 'round two' season of physical separation will not last as long as the first one did. Even if it does, though, we will not stop being the Church. We are a month ahead of everyone else, right? That means we are to lead the rest of the world—lead them to Christ, no matter what obstacles the world throws at us.

Happy New Year! Be safe and considerate as you shine the light of Christ into the dark parts of the world around us and lead people to the One true light, and I can't wait to see you at church

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It's a great time of year to remember people with your cards and Christmas wishes; especially those that are quarantined or homebound. Check out the birthday list—always a good place to start!!



- Dec 2.....David Westfaul
- Dec 6.....Linda Wiggins
- Dec 8.....Emmy Ware
- Dec 10.....Marjorie Carlow
- Dec 11.....Belinda Dammen
Jean Meredith
- Dec 13.....Patti Hanafourde
- Dec 14.....Billy Crocker
Holly Hall
- Dec 15.....Becky Summerlin
- Dec 16.....Scott Green
Katie Scott Westfaul
- Dec 18.....Jeane Bull
Mark Alan Ros
- Dec 20.....Janie Ferrer
- Dec 21.....Dianne Gilbert
- Dec 22.....Briley Chapuis
Henry Ros
- Dec 23.....Robert Weathersby
- Dec 24.....Ronnie Crocker
- Dec 25.....Travis Morie
Susie Riley
- Dec 27.....Bootsie Larsen
- Dec 29.....Kathleen Wilkerson
- Dec 31.....Hoyle McDonald
Tony Mello
Mickey Morie



Dec. 17 Steve & Cheryl Rancier

Dec 18 Doug & Judy Ros

Dec. 27 Richard & Cheryl Greer

Dec. 31 Steve & Cindy Haygood



If you are interested in joining the Eastlawn Family or just have questions about the church, please talk with Brother Jeff. Call him at 662-617-1077.



EASTLAWN UMC STAFF	
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