Advent Changes

Changes can be so hard, and often leave us feeling like we’ve lost something... except at church during Advent. The sanctuary is decorated. There are wreaths and trees, lights and pine-rope. There are banners and christmon ornaments. The music changes, and even the mood changes. Don’t you love the changes that Advent brings?

This year, there are more changes coming to the way we celebrate Advent at FUMC. Can I let you in on three of them?

1) We will be holding a Traveler’s Christmas Eve Service on Wednesday, December 21st at 7:00 p.m. I know it’s technically not Christmas Eve, but it’s for all those persons who are travelling on Christmas Eve and don’t want to miss out. This will be a traditional Christmas Eve Service with communion, music and candles at the end, while we sing “Silent Night.” This year there is no reason to choose between being with family, and being with your church family.

2) In the past, our 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service was kid-friendly. This year, the 4:00 p.m. service will be kid-focused. The music, the message, the order and flow of the service will be geared to our youngest disciples (and for those of us young at heart).

3) Christmas day falls on Sunday this year. After 4 services on Christmas Eve, we will have 1 service at 11:00 a.m. on Christmas Day. Among the fun things we’re doing that day will be an “Ugly Sweater Contest,” and for the kids a “Blessing of the Toys.” Bring toys to be blessed, and your ugly sweaters so that we can all enjoy!

What won’t change, not now—not ever—is that God, in Christ, will be present with us. In the music. In the prayers. In the message. Emmanuel. God is with us.

I look forward to seeing you and the guests you invite.

Advent Blessings,
Bart
## Staying Connected

### Our deepest sympathies are extended to the families of those who have recently passed away:

- The Kimmons family at the death of Betty Kimmons, on November 14, sister of Bonnie (Bill) Hagan.
- The Cadie family at the death of Helen Cadie, on November 19, sister of Linda Zak.
- The Alexander family at the death of Tom Alexander, on November 21, uncle of Suzanne Alexander and Jane Tillman.

## A Look Ahead

- **November 25, 26** — Photo Directory shoots
- **December 3** — UMW Cookie Walk
- **December 3** — Family Advent Event, 9:30 am
- **December 4** — Deadline for gifts under the *Christmas Giving Trees*
- **December 7** — Family Advent Event, 5:30 pm.
- **December 18** — Blue Christmas Worship Service, 4:00 pm.
- **December 21** — Traveler’s Christmas Worship Service, 7:00 pm.
- **January 8** — Church Conference, 12:15 pm.

## Staff

Rev. Bart Hildreth, Ph.D.
Rev. Debby Bartley
Rev. Peter Norton
Rev. Dr. Ken Gottman
Rev. Brint Hilliard
Margaret Love
Jack McCormick
Carolie Owens
Larry Ruebling
Sharon Byers
Karla Curry
Anne Brown
Sally Jacobsen
Kerri Johnson
Jim Nichols
Stacey Davis
Patti Adams
Pat Williams
Brielle Ketcherside

## Church Conference Scheduled for January 8

There is a Church Conference scheduled for Sunday, January 8 at 12:15 p.m.
We will meet in the Multi-purpose Room immediately following the 11:00 worship service.
The purpose of the conference is to form a Building Study Committee.
Everyone is invited to attend.

## COOKIE WALK

The United Methodist Women will be having their annual Cookie Walk on December 3, 2016 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Cookies will be $7.00 per pound.
Our ladies have a wide variety of festive cookies, breads, and fudge for the holidays.
Come at 9:00 and get the best selection.
Open to all FUMC members and the public.

We hope to see you there.

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THANK YOU, FIRST UMC!
The Simmons family was “framed” for delivering ninety-eight (98) Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes!
Pictured are Nate, Claire, Collin & Grace Simmons.
Operation Backpack

Christmas is coming soon and we are collecting for the children’s Christmas bags. Christmas break is a long break from school; we like to be sure the children are cared for.

Our needs are:
- 16 oz. jars of creamy peanut butter
- 16-20 oz. plastic jars of jelly
- Child size toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- New child size gloves and hats
- Individually wrapped Christmas Candy

We are always in need of the following:
- Canned vegetables
- Spaghetti-os
- Boxed mac-n-cheese
- Kid’s cereals

Please bring items to the food cabinet in the atrium by Dec. 11 to be included for Christmas. Thank you for all the support.

No Youth Group Sunday Night on November 27.

Blessing Bags on the Go for your Car

Rev. Debby

As you are waiting for the light to change and you see a person standing nearby with a cardboard sign, there are probably a myriad of thoughts running through your mind. Perhaps you are torn between wanting to help them and wondering if they really need help. If you want to help them, then the question becomes “how?”

Several years ago we introduced an option, which I would like to re-introduce. They are called Blessing Bags on the Go which you can carry in your car. It’s a simple gallon-size Ziploc bag with nonperishable food and snack items inside. Handing people a bag is a simple act of kindness and one which doesn’t take much effort to do. Yet to someone who is hungry, standing in the heat, cold, rain, or burning sun, it’s more than a simple act—it’s priceless. Below are suggestions for the bags; choose what works best for you. Blessings to you as you extend the love and grace of Jesus Christ to our sisters and brothers.

Premade tuna/chicken kit
Individual serving of applesauce/fruit cup AND a plastic spoon
Peanut butter crackers
Snack box of raisins/craisins
Snack bag of peanuts/trail mix
Granola bar
Bottle of water
Napkin
We invite you to

Blue Christmas
A Service of Hope for the Holidays

Sunday, December 18, 2016
4:00 p.m.
In the Chapel
Child Care Available Upon Request

(Please let Rev. Debby know if you will need child care: revdebby@sbcglobal.net)

Light refreshments will be served in the Parlor after the service

This service provides a time when we can, in company with others, acknowledge the sadness we feel at Christmas time. It’s a time when memories of past experiences and the pain of present reality can become overwhelming. In this service, we will be invited to reflect on the pain, the loneliness, and the sorrow we may feel and offer it all to our great sign of hope, the Holy Child of Bethlehem.

Please join us for a time of sharing scripture, praying, lighting candles, and celebrating communion.
YOU & YOURS ARE INVITED TO

At Journey to the Heartbeat of Christmas, families (of every age and size) participate in a self-guided, station to station discovery of the REAL Christmas Story — and create an Advent Wreath to use at home Christmas after Christmas.

This event is free, but reservations are required.

Go to www.fumcstcharles.org to select your preferred date and time.

Saturday, 12/3/2016, 9:30 to 11:30 am
OR
Wednesday, 12/7/2016, 5:30 to 7:30 pm

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY

Make Up Dates for Photo Directory

Many of you were not able to schedule a photo for our upcoming photo directory.

We will have two extra days available on December 29 and 30. Watch for times and registration information in the near future.
Family Advent Activities at First United Methodist Church

Sunday Worship: 8:00, 9:30 or 11:00 a.m.
Seeker Sermon Series: The Prophets Seeking Justice, Herod Seeking Control, Joseph Seeking Answers, The Shepherds Seeking a Sign, & The Magi Seeking Homage

Special Worship Services:
December 11: Choir Cantata at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. First Church’s Chancel Choir presents The Vivaldi Gloria.
December 18: Blue Christmas at 4:00 p.m. in the chapel. For those experiencing grief or stress at Christmas.
December 21: Travelers Christmas Worship Service at 7:00 p.m. Out of town for Christmas? Please join us for a traditional Christmas Eve Worship service for those who are traveling on the 24th. The Chancel Choir and the Children’s Choir will both sing.
December 24: Christmas Eve Worship
4:00 p.m.: This worship service is designed with children in mind. Hear the story of the birth of Jesus and sing together at this child-friendly candlelight Christmas Eve service.
7:00, 9:00, & 11:00 p.m.: Intergenerational Traditional Candlelight Worship service. Chancel Choir sings at 7:00 and 9:00; soloists at 11:00.
December 25 Christmas Day Worship at 11:00 a.m.
Our one worship service on Christmas day will focus upon families with children: There will be a Happy Birthday Jesus Cake and a toy parade.

Special Events:
Journey to the Heartbeat of Christmas: Families of every age and size participate in a self-guided, station to station discovery of the real Christmas story and create an Advent wreath. Each family will leave with an advent wreath and Advent calendar. No admission cost, but reservations are required. Choose either December 3 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. or December 7 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Christmas Cookie Walk: December 3 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Mix and Match $7.00 per pound.
United Methodist Women Christmas Luncheon: December 15 at 11:30 a.m. All are invited. Suggested donation: $5.00.
Advent Bible Study: The Journey by Adam Hamilton. The group will meet on December 4, December 11 & December 18 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

See our web site at www.fumcstcharles.org for more information.