



Holy Covenant UMC Newsletter

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Food Pantry Need:



**Communion Sunday,
December 2,
please bring rice and
macaroni & cheese.**

Issue: #163

December 1, 2018

2019: A Year in the Bible

We have a big challenge and opportunity for you as followers of Christ and for us together as a church. In 2019, we are challenging our adult members to read the Bible in one year. There are many ways to do this together. You can do it on an app on your phone, online, or your favorite Bible with a list of verses to read each day.



Even if you have read the Bible before, the reading we are doing might offer a whole new way to experience the Bible. We will be doing a chronological reading. The verses will be arranged in story order. You will read about events of King David's life and then the Psalm he wrote during those events. This reading seeks to tell the story of God and God's people in order.

This year in the Bible has many purposes. First, of course, the purpose is to get us all reading and knowing the Bible, but we don't want you to know the Bible for the sake of knowing your Bible. We want you to know the story of God and God's people so that you will see that it is your story. We want you to see yourself in the women and men in the Bible, to see how you share the same struggles they did. This year in the Bible is intended for us all to come to know God in a deeper more personal way.

Bible studies and classes are great, but there is something different. Something different happens when we engage the Bible on our own outside of church. Studies show that the best thing we as a church can do to support all levels of spiritual maturity is to inspire, encourage and equip people to read their Bibles. Methodist pastor, Dallas Willard in *The Great Omission* said, "The greatest issue facing the world today, with all its heartbreaking needs, is whether those who, by profession or culture, are identified as 'Christians' will become disciples-students, apprentices, practitioners-of Jesus Christ,

Children's Formation



Family Advent

There will be a Family Advent Event on Sunday, December 2 in the Covenant Center after worship. We will focus on the meaning of Advent and the Advent Wreath. There will be a family devotional practice to do following the event.

steadily learning from Him how to live the life of the Kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence." This is the ultimate goal of our year in the Bible. The mission of Holy Covenant is "transforming the world by making disciples of Jesus Christ".

What would 15 minutes a day of scripture reading really cost you, except 15 minutes? Think about what it might give you. You may come to know God in a deeper more intimate and more transformational way. You might enter your day with a little more grace and love in your heart, words and actions. You may find yourself more forgiving and in turn forgiven. You may find yourself more intentionally following the way of Jesus, acting as an agent for love, peace, justice, and compassion. 15 minutes a day that might change you and the world. Do you have something better to do than that in those 15 minutes? Join us. Take this journey with us into God's story, into your story.

Pastor Bill

Youth Formation



2018 Confirmands

For those confirmed last spring, we will have "refresher" module of confirmation the beginning of spring. While you are confirmed, we want to continue to give you intentional times of formation and a chance to continually re-affirm your faith.

Message from Pastor Carol



When does Christmastime begin for you? Is it when you hear your favorite Christmas Carol, hang your first evergreen wreath or plan your first festivity?

Many celebrate Christmas as the finale of the season but actually it is the beginning.

For the church, the first sign of Christmas is the North Star and the song of angels. The Christmas season begins at sunset on December 24th and ends 12 days later on

January 6th for Epiphany which commemorates the wisemen's arrival at the manger.

So what precedes the finale? It is the season of Advent which is the time of anticipating the coming of Christ. We use this time to look to God's continual coming as witnessed in Jesus' birth. The four Sundays of Advent have been designated to remember and receive the gifts of God's presence - peace, hope, love and joy.

Adult Formation

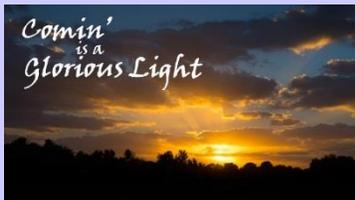


In the midst of Christmas decorating, gifts and parties, take time to get excited about how God will show up in all seasons to bring the best of gifts to you.

Live Big; Love Bigger!
Pastor Carol

There are new educational opportunities coming in 2019. Rev. Carol Sparks is planning on leading a new Sunday school class in the Sanctuary beginning the first of the year. This class will have times that others rotate through and teach as well. This class is for the new and longer-tenured members, married or single, young children/older children/no children, this is a class for everyone. If you don't have a small group yet, come check it out. Rev Bill will start a once-a-month book club and discussion group starting the first of the year as well. Since we have recently offered Disciple Bible Studies to teach basic Biblical literacy, now is a good time to offer a basic understanding of Christian theology. We will be using Daniel Migliore's *Faith Seeking Understanding* third ed. The book title reveals our agenda, to add greater understating to deepen our faith. More on both of these efforts to come.

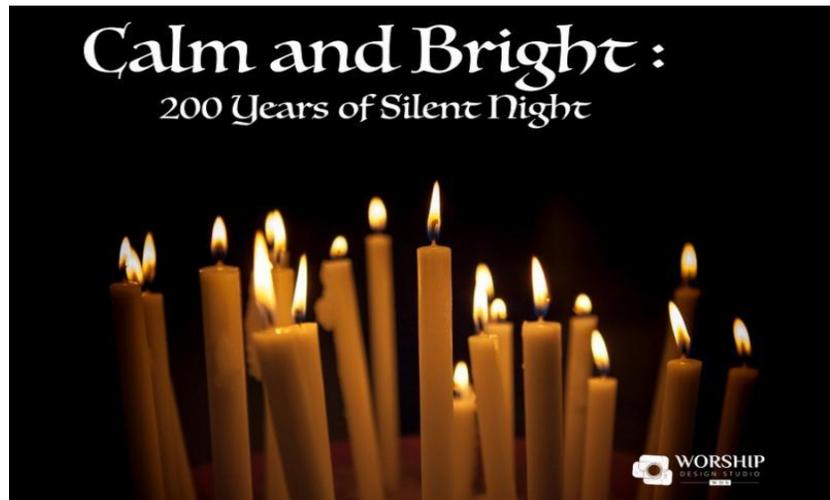
Music Ministry



2nd Sunday of Advent December 9

Make sure you don't miss the Wesleyan Choir, String Quintet and our own Gretchen Church with special Advent and

Advent Worship



Calm and Bright

This year is the 200th anniversary of the debut of *Silent Night, Holy Night*. This hymn has become the best-loved worship moment of many Christians - even those who only come to church once a year. Something mystical occurs as we light our candles and sing the hope of "all is calm, all is bright"-peace and light for the world. This worship series will celebrate the carol's message over the entire season of Advent and highlight its call for our lives that can guide us all year long.

Angel Tree

The Angel Tree is up in the narthex! Adopting an angel is simple. Take a paper angel off the tree with information about your angel. Purchase new, unused items and remove price tags. Put items in a bag and attach your angel to the outside of the bag. Bring your bagged gifts to Holy Covenant by **Sunday, December 16.**



L.I.F.T. (Ladies In Fellowship Together)



Thursday, December 13 6:30 pm

We will have our monthly LIFT (Ladies in Fellowship Together) meeting on Thursday, October 11 at 6:30 pm at the home of Lois Eaton. Go to [L.I.F.T.](#) for more information. Bring a snack

or covered dish to share.

Christmas poems and music.



**3rd Sunday of Advent
December 16**

Sunday, December 16th you will get to hear the Children's Chimes ringing *O Come, All Ye Faithful*, the Cherub Choir singing *Holy Baby, Holy Child* and the Music Machine narrating and singing *Come, Light of the World*-. Support our youngest members of Holy Covenant UMC!

Blood Drive



**Sunday, December 16
8:30 am to 12:30 pm
in the Covenant Center**
Save a life!

We will enjoy food, fellowship and a short devotional. If you do not have time to prepare a dish, please join us anyway - we want you with us! Come join us for this time of fellowship!

Parents' Night Out

**Saturday, December 15
3 to 8 pm
in the Covenant Center**

Ages Infant - 5th Grade. *This is a special day and time to help parents during this busy season.* Reservations are required by Wednesday, December 12! Reserve a place for your child at hcumc.org. You may drop off and pick up children anytime during the designated hours. *Dinner will be served.* \$20 per child; \$50 max per same family.



Christmas Eve Family Worship



December 24 at 5:30 pm

A kid-friendly worship service with favorite Christmas carols and ending with candle and glow stick light.

ECDP



So Proud

ECDP is so proud of our kindergarten class who decided the week before our Thanksgiving Feasts to do a food drive for Holy Covenant's Food Pantry. Our kindergarten class organized the food drive for the whole school. They raised over 100 pounds of food for the members of our community who make use of the Food Pantry. We are teaching our children to care about others, and they are exceeding our expectations. Praise God for generosity.

In December our school will be doing our Christmas Programs on December 19th and 20th at 9:15 am. Please join us to see what our little ones are learning in preschool.

Sunday Morning Schedule

**9:00 am Sunday
School for all ages**

**10:30 am Unity
Worship**

Staff

Rev. Carol Sparks
csparks@hcumc.org
Senior Pastor

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship



December 24 at 7:00 pm

Childcare will be provided for this worship service full of Christmas carols, candlelight and celebration of the birth of Christ.

Christmas Eve Communion & Candlelight Worship



December 24 at 11:00 pm

We will share Holy Communion during this worship service and end with candlelight and music to usher in Christmas.

Rev. Bill Mauldin

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of Family Ministries and
Discipleship

Rev. Jim Guest

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Elise Webb Odell

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Administrative Assistant

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

The Herndon family; the Knibbs family; Donna McNally; Mary Harrison; Maliq Davis; Brenda Anderson; Carlos Ponce; Shelly Martinez; Jojo Sain; Susie Ponce; Viktor Parker; Barbara Burns; Dick Renfro; Jan Reynolds; Jerry & Elizabeth Hunsaker; Randy Sutherland; Kayla Soto-Nava; Linesha Maicera; Tom Yull; Stephanie Flangin; Semyon & Ilana Narosov; Trevor Tilton; Sara Price; and Michael Schroeder.

From Our Lay Leader



There was a time when nobody believed that someone could run a four-minute mile. People believed your heart couldn't take it and it would explode. But Robert Banister didn't think like most people. Robert Banister would visualize himself running a sub four-minute mile. He would visualize himself crossing the

finish line in under four minutes. So, what did Robert Banister do on May 6, 1954? He ran a mile in 3:59.4. Guess what happened next? More people started running a sub four-minute mile. Someone proved that it could be done. People started to believe it could be done. People started to believe they could do it. Look what Robert Banister started. Robert Banister inspired people.

What do you want to do that you think you can't? What do you want to do that you are afraid of doing or even trying? What is holding you back from reaching your full potential? Do you know what the answer is? The answer is your mind. Our own mind is often what holds us back more than anything else. Our mind makes up excuses. Our mind gives us reasons to not start. Our mind will tell us to quit too soon. Why? Because we don't believe in ourselves and we forget that we aren't alone. But guess what? When we persevere and fight and accomplish our goals, do you know what else you do? You inspire others to push harder. You inspire others to fight. You inspire others to get up. You inspire others to start. But most importantly, you inspire others to believe. To believe it CAN be done. To believe in a better tomorrow. But most importantly, to believe in yourself.

Let's all believe in each other and inspire each other and lead each other and do great things together. Together we can move mountains.

-Aaron Hunsaker

He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." - Matthew 17:20

**Our loved ones in the
military**

Levi Bayard, Hunter Blue,
Kate Blue, KeNi Gaines,
Zach Glass, Jake Oliver,
Antonio Ramirez, Ashton
Rudolf and Diana Rudolf.



**meeting Christ in our local community
to serve our children and youth**



We are welcoming and open to all people;
black or white or brown, you are welcome here;
rich or poor, young or old, you are welcome here,
gay or straight, citizen or sojourner, you are welcome here.