

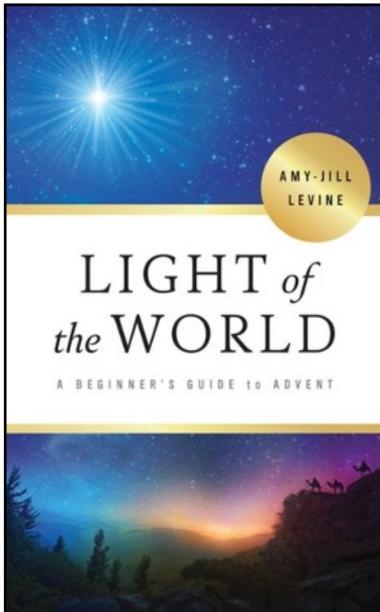


A United Church of Christ/
United Methodist Church
& a LGBTQIA
Welcoming Congregation

UCUP

2020

December Newsletter



ADVENT STUDY - WEDNESDAY NIGHTS on Zoom

December 2, 9, 16, 23 from 6:30-8pm

Join Angie Wolle & Tanya Sorenson & Pastor Cathy in this Advent Study - *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent*. Author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the story of the birth of Jesus. Join us in study as Dr. Levine traces the Christmas narrative through the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit from the Magi. These stories open conversations around connections of the Gospel stories to the Old Testament, the role of women in first-century Jewish culture, the importance of Mary's visitation and the revolutionary implications of Mary's Magnificat, the census and the stable, and the star of Bethlehem and the flight to Egypt.

You can download the book to your kindle or other device, or if you would like a hard copy, Pastor Cathy has a few copies for \$13 each.

VIRTUAL BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

on Zoom - Thursday, December 17th - 7pm

This year there is much to lament. People have undergone unprecedeted loss this year. Family and friends have succumbed to death in this pandemic. At the end of 2020 it is anticipated that close to 300,000 people will have died from the coronavirus in the United States, and 1.5 million worldwide. Millions have lost economic security through loss of jobs, some have lost businesses they built over a lifetime. Most of us have lost our beloved rhythms of life that felt familiar and gave our lives the richness of gatherings and adventure. People are feeling increasing anxiety along with isolation. And we can name so many losses related to hatred and violence.

Throughout Advent we proclaim hope, love, joy, and peace in the midst of difficulty. This is the church's gift to the world – that our faith story is grounded in the presence of God that came to dwell among us in the midst of hardship. As we move closer to the "longest night" – the Winter Solstice – we will hold a "Blue Christmas" service to acknowledge and remember those we have lost. It is important to name that sometimes hope, love, joy, and peace are distant feelings when we have encountered so much loss. The anticipation of renewed grief as Christmas Eve approaches can be difficult to bear for many. Ritual helps us move through these feelings and funnel our heartbreak in ways that, while not alleviating it totally, gives space for a tangible remembering. This will be especially important in 2020 because we have not been able to gather and ritualize our loss in the ways we usually do.

Join us for a prayer service when we can, with others acknowledge the "blue" feelings we have at Christmas time, the reasons for them, and offer them to God. We hope and pray that you will find comfort in knowing you are not alone.

VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

December 24th - 7pm

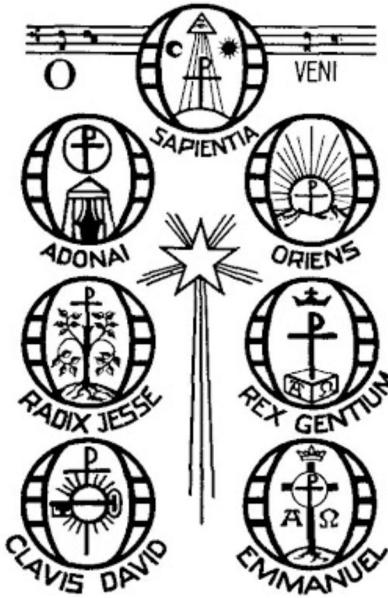
This year our Christmas Eve service will truly be like none other UCUP has ever experienced. We are still working out the details for what our virtual Christmas Eve Service will look like. But we will definitely be holding a service - with candlelight during Silent Night.



FROM OUR PASTOR

ADVENT WORSHIP THEME - "O ANTIOPHONS"

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



For Christians, Advent is a time of waiting. Some might say that the Year of our Lord 2020 has been one long season of Advent - waiting for the pandemic to subside, waiting for the election to be over, waiting for the deaths from COVID to stop, waiting for a vaccination, waiting for racism to be eradicated. Another word for waiting is longing. Longing is a deeply spiritual word. It's the word the ancient Israelites use to describe the coming of the Messiah.

Advent is a sacred time opening to the mystery and certainty of God's presence. The sacred texts of this liturgical season set a different tone than the cultural Christmas season. One of the ways early Christians addressed their longing for the Messiah was through a series of Advent prayers developed by Benedictine monks in the Middle Ages. The last week before Christmas, Christians would pray these prayers inviting Jesus to come. The origin of Advent means *Come, Lord Jesus*. These prayers are known as the Great "O Antiphons". The Advent hymn, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, is based on the "O Antiphons".

The "O Antiphons" were originally in Latin, the universal language of the church until recently. The importance of the O Antiphons is twofold: each one highlights a title for the Messiah: O Emmanuel, O Wisdom, O Lord, O Root of Jesse, O Key of David, O Dayspring and O Desire of the Nations. Each one also refers to the prophecy of Isaiah of the coming of the Messiah.. Our worship theme for Advent will be based on these prayers of the "O Antiphons" as we sing our way through ALL seven verses of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* in the four Sundays of Advent.

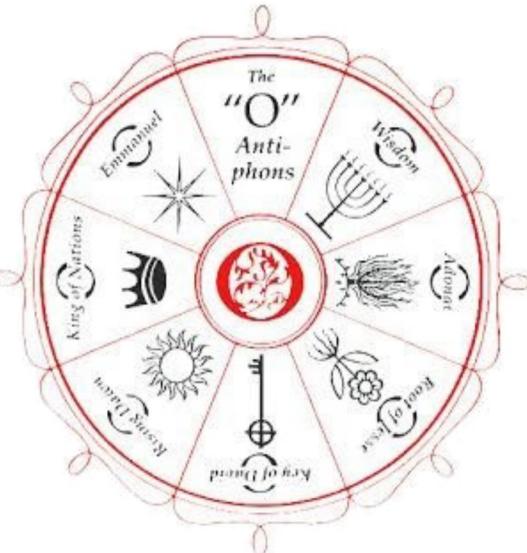
The Isaiah scriptures will be read for the Advent candle lighting each week, followed by singing two verses of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" before the sermon that highlights the themes for that week

November 29th - O Come thou Wisdom (Sapientia) & O Come Adonai

December 6th - O Come thou Root of Jesse (Radix Jesse) &
O Come thou Key of David (Clavis David)

December 13th - O Come thou Dayspring (Oriens) &
O Come O Desire of Nations (Rex Gentium)

December 20th - O Come, O Come Emmanuel



There are seven verses, representing a different biblical view and symbol of the Messiah. Originally they were used in monastic vespers during the seven days before Christmas, from December 17 -23, so by Christmas Day, everyone had a good understanding of Isaiah's prophecy of who the Messiah was. The order of the prayers is significant. Starting with the last title in reverse order, the first letter forms an acrostic/anagram response: the Latin words **ERO CRAS**, "Tomorrow, I will come" or "I shall be."

Most of us grew up singing this Advent hymn, with its ancient words and haunting, mysterious chant like melody. Can you summon the memory of our voices joining together to sing the resounding chorus of "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel."

These seven prayers—the Great Antiphons, or O Antiphons—are among the richest treasures of Advent. haunting biblical images of creation, redemption, and ultimate restoration. They remind us that Christ, whose return we anticipate during Advent, is surrounding and sustaining us already. The ancient church used the "O Antiphons" for Advent because they wanted a simple, yet profound way, to help people know the most important things about Jesus. As we take the next four weeks to prepare for Jesus' coming, the O Antiphons redirect our Advent preparation and focus back toward Christ.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I've always been a fan of celebrating the holidays in order. First Halloween, then Thanksgiving, and THEN, Christmas. Christmas creep, and the appearance of Christmas decorations in the stores on the heels of Halloween candy isn't new. But this year, a walk around the neighborhood reveals a surprising jump on outdoor lights and Christmas trees shining through the windows. This early installation of Christmas decorations has also been noted in the news. The wise mental health experts featured in the newscasts tell us that in the midst of the pandemic, the early decorations are a good thing, and that we are craving the holiday lights and all that they represent.

I've been thinking about this, and realize that there may be a tendency to keep Christmas in a special gift-wrapped box, to be taken out for just a few carefully planned weeks each year. With the COVID numbers surging and stricter guidelines and limitations in place, we're facing dark and challenging days. We are at a point where this has been going on for a long time, and we're weary of the restrictions on gatherings and travel. The novelty of Zoom is wearing thin. In short, we could use a little more light and hope in our lives. So, why not Christmas? What better than to invite the light of the Christ Child into our lives ... a few weeks early?

At the Thompson household, we're breaking with tradition and will install our outdoor Christmas lights BEFORE Thanksgiving. Don says we'll put them up, but won't switch them on until Thanksgiving Day. We'll see if we can wait! The boxes of Christmas decorations may come out a little earlier, too. It's time to put some jolly in our ho ho hum!



We know that we still have a long road to travel before we emerge from the darkness of the pandemic. We're heartened by news of progress with vaccines, but realize we are still months away from all of us having access to a vaccine. While we're grateful for the ways in which we have been able to continue the worship and ministries of our church, we miss the in-person connections, and long for the traditional celebrations of the Advent season.

It's reassuring to remember that we always have the light of Christmas. I'm reminded of the song, "*This little light of mine.*" We don't have to "hide it under a bushel ... no! I'm going to let it shine!" We can break with tradition and switch on the Christmas lights a little earlier this year. When we do so, we are inviting the light into our own households, and also sharing it with our neighbors and our community. Let's deck the halls and light up our world!

With hope,
Marilyn Thompson

UCUP MOVES TO MODIFIED STAGE 2 STATUS

In light of the recent COVID guidelines announced by Gov. Jay Inslee, our "Reopen" ad hoc committee determined that it would be best to place the church in a modified Stage 2 of our plan, Plan for Reopening and Transforming during the COVID-19 Crisis. The church has been operating in Stage 2 of the plan which allows for limited activity in the church building, with limits of 10 participants indoors, and 50 participants at outdoor gatherings. Under our modified Stage 2, we are reducing the number of participants for indoor activities to 5, and outdoor gatherings to 30. Given the recent surge in COVID cases in Pierce County, we feel it is best to limit gatherings to a smaller number of participants. Thanks for doing your part to keep everyone safe and healthy!

All of the safety protocols outlined in our plan must be followed:

- All employees and visitors must complete the login/logout process, including temperature check
- All employees and visitors wear masks and follow safety protocols (handwashing, social distancing)
- Upon preparing to leave building, clean high-touch areas, including restrooms, door handles, and office workspaces.

Faith Action Network held its annual dinner on Sunday, November 15, 2020. It was held virtually.

We, at United Church in University Place, attended in larger numbers than ever before, at least to my recollection. Those attending included: Cathi Cline, Jim and Nancy Davis, Pastor Cathy Law, Neil and Norma Rader, Ruth Cannon, Elizabeth Scherman, Dorothy McCuistion, Marilyn and Don Thompson, Vic Bode and Leslie Ann Knight, Pat Mail, and Judy Thierry. Our previous attendance record was 13.



The program began with singing. There were two presentations by Washington state's poet laureate, Claudia Castro Luna. There were introductory prayers, a speech by Rick Steves, and a listing of successes and things we are going to be working toward in both the previous and next legislative sessions. In a surprise move, the FAN Board delivered the FAN Justice Leadership Awards to all the people who have been involved with Faith Action Network over the years. We were rewarded with a photographic montage which shared photographs from any person or group who sent them in. Elizabeth took the above photo of our pre-party group and sent it in, so we could be featured in the slideshow of photos of gatherings around the state. Thus, our church and its individuals earned the Justice Leadership Award for 2020.

Should you be interested in learning about Faith Action Networks and the issues we support, please look up its URL at fanwa.org. Also, our Interfaith Action Day is scheduled for February 11, 2021. It will also be held virtually, which might make it more accessible. We look forward to your participation.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert M. Brown



A Partnership for the Common Good
We celebrate with you the success of our first virtual Annual Dinner on November 15! People from all corners of WA rose up to join us! In the face of multiple pandemics, you have risen up to be community in new ways, take care of neighbors, build mutual aid efforts, non-violently vigil/march/rally for Black Lives, stand with essential workers who provide healthcare and harvest our food, vote your values, and more. **Together with you and our sponsors, adding in some checks that have come in this week, we met our goal, raising \$132,722 for the work ahead!**

You can watch the full program at our YouTube channel: bit.ly/WatchFANDinner2020. And the giving link is still open until 11/30 - bit.ly/DONATETOFAN. Please see our photo slideshow of Awardees – the FAN Roll Call for images of those of you who joined us in 20 pre-event Zoom parties.

Rick Steves brought his words of encouragement for our shared mission to create a more just and equitable world, reminding us "FAN gives our love traction." WA State Poet Laureate Claudia Castro Luna shared inspiring poetry. Faith leaders and FAN staff and board members spoke to the ways people and communities will continue to RISE UP TOGETHER to rebuild our democracy, repair divisions, resist systemic racism, and refocus on economic and environmental justice. We are grateful to our partners at Synchronicity Events and Michael B. Maine studio for helping us transform the connection of our Renton and Spokane dinners into a virtual event. Our priorities for the 2021 State Legislative Session are taking shape and will be approved by our Governing Board in November. FAN does its work with more than 25 coalitions, where we bring faith voices to the table—those coalitions have been meeting since the last legislative session to hone their bills for the session. Interfaith Advocacy Day will be held February 11th as a virtual event.

JOYS & CONCERNS

Our prayers are with Pamela Maddess, at home with Coronavirus...for Ron Wicks recovering from a recent heart attack...for Kathy Munn who hurt her arm in a fall...for Neva Laurie-Berry's 96 year old Granny recovering from pneumonia...for Angie Wolle's sister Starr who recently broke her pelvis and is traveling to Nashville to visit family.

The Stewardship Committee gets four stars for the shows they've put on the last few weeks. It was REALLY good (fun) to hear and see Janna Hosanna Anna again...and to have the Church Lady with us. Could be wrong, but Church Lady looked a lot like someone from United Church!

How great to see and or hear those who join the ZOOM service on Sundays...and stay around for the fellowship time...welcome back to 'the main land', Liz Gregg. Think we all enjoyed seeing the pictures last Sunday – trying to come up with the names of some of the people in pictures taken during the first 40 years of United Church. Thanks Pamela and Janet for your work in making this video at the time of our 40th celebration.The Cares & Concerns Committee is celebrating/rejoicing, Michelle Wallace has agreed to join us. Thank you, Michelle...and THANK YOU to all of you who are serving in an office or on a committee.

Christmas is coming...a time when we reach out to family and friends, please include those from United Church that can't get out or even have visitors, because of this virus: Win Bjarke...Sharon Britcher...Randi Byrd, Mary Jones, Doris Larsen, Donna Shoe, Michelle Wallace and JoAn Walston. Please keep all our kids (that includes all kids) and parents and teachers, as they deal with a very different school year, in your prayers. Wash your hands often, wear your masks and pray we'll be able to gather in the sanctuary before too long.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR 2021

Happy Birthday!

december birthdays

- 2 David Ohls
- 3 AJ Milleret
- 4 Noa Oden - 15
- 6 Kelly Krisman
- 9 Jeff Gillard
- 9 Emily Hartley
- 9 Marge Lehmann
- 10 Pat Mail
- 12 Janet Wicks
- 14 Jim Davis
- 15 Tamaya Tereshkova
- 16 Neil Rader
- 17 Duncan Foley
- 17 Leif Oden
- 20 Jeff Andersen
- 22 Kathy Munn
- 24 Pastor Cathy Law
- 25 Jesus of Nazareth



Blessing of the Bedding

Packing up bedding to deliver to Tiny Village at 1st Christian Church.



FAMILY HOUSING NETWORK BEDDING FINDS NEW HOMES

Submitted by Dorothy McQuiston

Since Family Housing Network discontinued using area churches to house some of the agency's homeless families, our piles of blankets, pillows and sheets have been waiting patiently for new homes in our fellowship hall storage room. First Christian Church in Tacoma is thrilled to receive our bedding for their 40 tiny homes that will house homeless families. The tiny houses are a project of Low Income Housing Institute, based in Seattle, and will be occupied in December. Drive by 602 N. Orchard to see the homes.

While it is sad to see the end of this mission, we know times change and as a society we look for new and better ways to keep people sheltered during hard times. Many thanks to everyone who helped with housing the homeless at UCUP for thirty years. Our blankets and sheets will once again keep people warm and dry in their beds at night.

To read more about these tiny homes, please visit this link:

<https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article246969422.html>



A BIT OF UCUP HISTORY...

Submitted by Joyce Demarest

A UPON A TIME... way back in 1989, United Church joined with a number of other churches and two schools, a program Associated Ministries was starting to take turns housing homeless families for a week at a time – giving them a place to sleep and meals. We had two big questions, HOW and WHERE could we do make it work in our building.

WHERE: The Fellowship Hall, Vern Lange and a few others put hooks up and figured out and cut poles to hang cloth panels, so different size areas could be made for our 'guest', depending on the size of their family. Mildred Seales cut and sewed all of the panels used to divide the areas.
HOW: Mary Pauley would head the program at United Church, leading an army of volunteers. The beds for the 'guests' would be delivered on Saturday morning, before the families came in the evening. We needed to supply the bedding for them while they were with us..a call went out for bedding, from mattress covers to pillow cases. Nels and Win Bjarke bought and put up shelves in the long closet to store the bedding. We had 'guests' 3 and sometimes 4 times a year and each Saturday the beds were delivered a crew put up the poles and hung the panels – according to how many family units we were expecting. There was also a crew waiting to make the beds and fix each guest area with a clock, radio and a box of tissues. Other volunteers bought dinner, some stayed to serve as evening host. Around 10p.m. the overnight hosts arrived and stayed to clean up after breakfast and send the guests off for the day, with lunches. Usually every day brought in different people for evening hosts, suppliers of meals and overnight hosts. One of the big jobs was laundering the bedding when the 'guests' moved on and getting it put away. Most times the guests numbered in the mid-teens, but in the early years it wasn't unusual for the number to be in the 20s.

After this program ran for 3 or 4 years there was a problem at one of the other churches and it shut down for a few months. Catholic Services got it going again under the name Phoenix Housing. Some years later the name was changed to Family Housing Network. United Church continued to house 'guests' 3 or 4 times a year until 2 years ago when FHN discontinued using the churches. Many thanks to all the leaders that followed Mary Pauley (some are still with us) and to all those that helped out, especially the overnight host that got a pregnant guest to the hospital on time!

Christmas Eve Offering

Although we will not be meeting in person on Christmas Eve, as we have done the past several years, the offering for the December 24th service will go to the Emergency Food Network. Just make a note on your donation, whether you write a check or give online, of the amount you would like to give to EFN. For every \$1 that is donated EFN provides five meals for our neighbors in need. To learn how EFN does this, visit <https://efoodnet.org>. This year it's more important than ever to support Emergency Food Network.



SNL STEWARDSHIP LIVE IS A WRAP!

From Pat Mail from the Prayer Chain: We give thanks for our Stewardship Team which has informed us, encouraged us, and brought us laughter and tears. Bravo for their insights, humor and messages. Thanks to Joe, Don, Janet, Pamela and their SNL STEWARDSHIP LIVE guests: Tanya, Dennis, AJ & The Preach Boys, Nancy, Joyce, Marilyn, Dave, Robert, and Angie. Bravo and Bravo!!

From your finance committee: Current tabulation is 28 pledges for \$122,000 towards our \$190,000 budget goal. Thank you to all those who mailed in your pledge and Time & Talent sheets, or dropped them off at the church on Consecration Sunday. It was great to see so many of you in person! With income expected from other sources, we still need about \$45,000 more in pledges to realize our projected goal, so if you haven't sent in your pledge yet, please consider doing so.



"You may have conversations with people in need or crisis and wonder what is available? How do I connect them to resources?

Here is a wallet card with hotline numbers for easy reference. You can make a difference!

Homelessness is now being addressed through a single line 2-1-1 phone call. This has cut down on wait times, duplicative work and gets families and individuals connected effectively. The goal is rapid rehousing. There are many food banks hence the link which you may want to put in your smartphone or bookmark on your computer. The other hot lines are 24/7. Please note the National Hotline for suicide has a link "ask" that takes you to a two-page reference and simple screener. There are many ways to take care of one another during these times and sometimes we need outside help."

Judy Thierry, on behalf of Peace and Justice



Suicide National Hotline.....	1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Domestic Violence Pierce County 24/7.....	1-253-383-2593
Homeless coordinated entry.....	2-1-1
GLBTQ – Trevor 24/7.....	1-866-488-7386 text or chat
Food Bank.....	https://co.pierce.wa.us/454/Food-Banks
Family Housing Network.....	253-472-5340 (hours 9-5)
Washington Listens Behavioral Health line..	1-833-681-0211



Associated Ministries' (AM) first-ever "Focus Week" online event reached 250 people during 4 one-hour sessions. Recordings will soon be posted to hear from partners/experts whose hearts and minds are centered on this great need in our community. Learn of the reality and explore the myths that hold us back from ending homelessness. Rehousing a family permanently costs \$2400.

AM is one of our benevolences. The burden, suffering and shortened life spans of those unhoused doesn't have to be. Rapid rehousing works. Supported housing with wrap around services is effective and in dollars and cents less costly than the police, medical and emergent social services otherwise applied. Questions? Please ask Judy Thierry or Ruth Cannon who were able to attend.

Associated Ministries donation page:

<https://associatedministries.org/get-involved/donate/>



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SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO ABOVE ADDRESS

No matter who you are,
Or where you are on life's journey, **you're**
Welcome here.