

Circuit Rider

A monthly publication of the First United Methodist Church of Glendale • Dec 2021



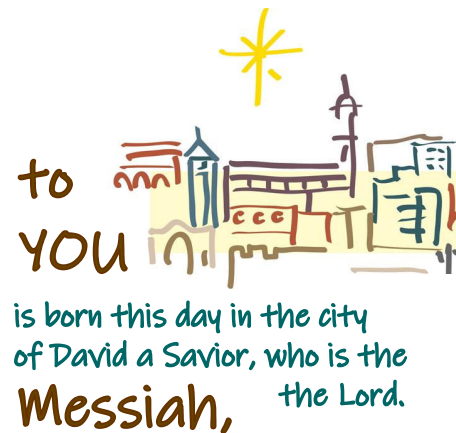
In Person!

As we plan for the coming season of Advent and Christmas, it's difficult not to engage in comparisons with where we were a year ago. In October of last year, we were beginning to have discussions about re-opening for in person worship, at least on a limited basis. Then, the pandemic surge came, and it remained in full force until well into the New Year. And as a result, although we offered a variety of Advent and Christmas worship experiences, including live streaming from our Sanctuary, a Young Peoples' Christmas Program, and a Traditional Service on Christmas Eve, all of those services had to be experienced virtually, online.

This year, in great contrast, will be a blessing. Unlike Advent and Christmas a year ago, as things currently stand, we do not anticipate that COVID conditions will

change dramatically in the near future. And accordingly, here at First United Methodist, we're looking forward to sharing this hopeful and festive season with each other – in person!

And that is very much in keeping with the spirit of this season. As we read in the Gospel of Luke, God gave all people a very special gift. For several millennia, God had sent God's direction to God's people through a series of leaders and prophets, who heard God's messages, then shared them with those who would listen. But with the birth of Jesus, our Savior, God began an entirely new chapter. God wanted to be with us in person, and began that journey in the humblest of circumstances, coming into the world through birth in a stable. And the message of the angels also



made clear that this was a new beginning in another way. This new relationship with God was for "All the people," not just for those who had been in a covenantal relationship with God through the commandments of the Old Testament. All were welcome to come and worship this Newborn Savior, the Christ Child.

Of course, as we plan for the Sundays and Events of Advent and Christmas, the pandemic is still

(Continued on page 3)



First United Methodist Church

7102 N. 58th Drive • Glendale, AZ 85301

Phone: 623.939.1409 • Fax: 623.236.9284

www.glendalefirstumc.com

Church Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 am—3:00 pm

Rev. A. Tom Jelinek, Pastor

Church Missions

The Mission Committee has been purchasing a variety of items for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child gift boxes. These are sent to children of various ages, toddlers through teenagers, in over 160 countries and territories. In addition to gifts, the boxes include the Good News of Jesus Christ to some of the most remote areas in the world.

We were able to fill 60 boxes altogether for boys and girls in all age groups. We want to thank all of you who have financially supported this project. We received very

generous donations to the Mission Fund, and this support has made this all possible, as well as our other mission activities such as the Brad Riner Assistance Office and UMOM.

Our Mission Team is looking for other programs where we can give our time and financial support. Please contact any Mission team member or the church office if you have a program you'd like us to consider. We want to



Members of the Mission Committee fill and deliver shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child.



thank our church family again for their generous support!

Merry Christmas!

—Jeanne Rumbold, Chairperson of the Mission Committee

Choir Cantata—Take Me Back to Bethlehem

Each year, as Christmas approaches, our hearts are somehow drawn again to Bethlehem.

We long to relive the story — to see the shepherds on the hillside, to hear the angels in the heavens, to journey with the wise men, and more than anything, to worship the newborn King lying in the manger.

Join us on Sunday, December 19 at 9:00 am for the Chancel Choir Christmas Cantata, "Take Me Back

to Bethlehem," arranged by Mason Brown and Russell Mauldin. This musical is filled with stirring arrangements of favorite carols and is tied together with engaging narration. The cantata will be performed on the fourth Sunday of Advent during 9:00 am worship, and we will also have a Friday or Saturday night performance in December; watch for more information.



Rev. Jelinek, Rev. Wick and Larry Del Rae set up the sanctuary for the 1st Sunday of Advent.



In Person!*(Continued from page 1)*

with us. We hope, and pray, that COVID will subside once and for all as quickly as possible. In the meantime as much as we would like to discard all precautions, and return to conditions as they were a couple of years ago, that still isn't possible – not yet. Especially now, as temperatures drop, people are more likely to be in crowds for shopping and gatherings, and as cases of COVID are rising moderately, we ask that all participants in our worship and other activities wear masks indoors, and practice distancing with anyone who is not vaccinated, for their protection.

Let's prepare for a wonderful blessing in the weeks ahead. Let's give thanks that we will be able to celebrate the many festive and inspiring occasions of Advent and Christmas in person, shared with family & friends. And as we do, let's remember and celebrate the meaning of this season once again, that God gave us the greatest gift of all, God's presence with us, in person, in the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

With a prayer for a safe, joyous, and blessed Advent and Christmas Season,

Pastor Tom

Critical Need!

Christine and William Jones will be out of town the week of Christmas. This means that the worship services on Christmas Eve and December 26 will not be able to be recorded without your help! We have only one person currently operating the sound board, and no one to take over the video camera or livestream. We can go back to the traditional video camera method of recording and then uploading the video, or we can train additional people on what to do with the camera, the soundboard, and/or the live stream software.

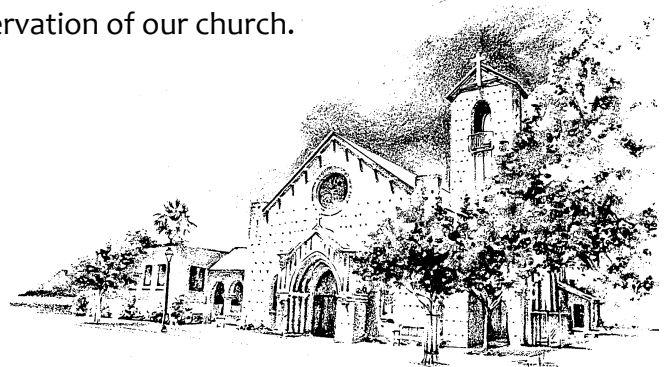
We need volunteers, and will be happy to train you in a job you are interested in and can work a schedule up so that you only work one Sunday a month. This is a team that currently has 4 people but should really have a dozen, alternating which worship service they work. We are taking steps to make this an easier process, but we still need people to volunteer.

Please prayerfully consider whether you can give a little of your time to the church and help share the message of God each week. We have a great need. We are waiting to hear from you.

***A Message from the Brick-by-Brick Committee***

Our committee continues to work on gathering the materials needed for our grant application to the state Heritage Fund. It is a complicated process. We are now working with Paula Moloff, who was in the City of Glendale's Historic Preservation office along with Ron Short when we made our Heritage Fund grant request in 2008. She has worked on hundreds of grants including Historical Preservation grants, which are more complicated than most grants. We thank everyone who has been donating to the Brick-by-Brick Fund to help with the stabilization and preservation of our church.

—Ann Nimlos



A Message from the Church Council

Grace and peace to you dear friends, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We wake up; it's another day and still the COVID-19 pandemic is with us. It would be easy to get depressed, our whole way of life is upside down, twisted and difficult. Yet, we have much to be thankful for this past year.

We thank God for our food, shelter and loved ones. I am thanking God for the church's solar system that is on track to be up and working in a couple of weeks. I am thankful for the beautiful weather, trees, flowers, and the wonderful members of our church who have worked hard to keep the church operating, the Bible study leaders, the Sunday school teachers, the greeters, the ushers, the volunteers helping Rebecca in the office, the volunteers helping in the Riner Office, the choir, the trustees, the cooks making the WOW lunches, the missions members reaching out to others, the people giving their money and the sound/video/slide volunteers that help us to livestream our services. God blesses us even when we pray for each other and offer a word of good cheer!



And now Christmas is around the corner! The season of love, joy, peace and blessings calls out to us to heal our broken hearts and fill us with the Holy Spirit, to give us strength, wisdom and love for all. May we all be open to God's messages to us this Christmas, ready to say, "Here I am Lord, send me!"

God Bless You,
—Ann Nimlos



Each year, the West District prays for all the churches in its jurisdiction for one month. In December, please pray for:

- **Sunrise UMC, Phoenix**
- **Willowbrook UMC, Sun City**
- **Youngtown UMC**

ADVENT

A Season of Preparation

Four Week Advent Book Study "Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience"

In John Wesley's famous sermon, "*The Almost Christian*," he encouraged people to follow Christ whole-heartedly. In "*Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience*," author and pastor Magrey de-Vega leads a group of authors in exploring how we can make the same commitment to Christ during Advent and connect our Wesleyan heritage with the traditional Advent themes of Love, Hope, Joy, and Peace.

Rev. Tom Wick will lead this 4-week DVD study beginning Sunday, November 28 at 10:15 am in the Fireside area of Fellowship Hall. We have books available if you would like to have one.

Update from the Finance Subcommittee

In October, members and friends of First Glendale generously donated \$19,310.33 (down about \$16,000 from our September donations of \$35,533.27) to support the operation and programs of our church. This total includes money received for the General Fund, the Brad Riner Assistance Office, Capital Improvements, Wednesday Lunches, Brick-by-Brick, Missions and other designated funds as well as interest and increases to our TD Ameritrade investment account. Focusing on the General Fund, we had income of \$16,650.76 and expenses of \$21,745.45. Our expenses exceeded our income by about \$5,100 for the month. The balance in our checking account accordingly decreased to \$27,724.02.

The October donations were under budget in both the pledged and unpledged giving categories, although the former is still ahead of budget for the year. What we budget for our monthly donations in all categories (excluding the designated funds) is \$28,624, so you can see in the month of October we underperformed. I will admit to some wishful thinking in the finance committee. We typically overestimate the amount in the unpledged giving partly to present a balanced budget to the council and partly to trust that God will meet our needs. (And He has always helped us.) Part of the shortfall in the unpledged giving is due to the pandemic and the church not fully functioning with only one worship service currently. The uptick we usually see in unpledged giving during the last half of the year has not happened this year.

Expenses are typical for a month in which we made one apportionment payment. Nothing was above budget. A couple of things to note: (1) We did not receive the electric bill for our main meter – a huge savings. But as much as we don't want to look a gift horse in the mouth, we suspect that APS has not turned into a charitable organization and we will have to eventually pay what we owe. This will be investigated. (2) Last year we cut a number of programs drastically trying to balance the budget. This is not the way to grow the church. We need all of our members to help fully fund the church.

Everyone received a pledge card in November. If you haven't turned yours in yet, it is not too late. We will gratefully accept your pledge card at any time. If you misplaced yours, just let us know, and we will get you another.

Finally, it's December! Every year during December we collect money towards our staff Christmas gifts. Please make a donation this year. Just mark your check as "Staff Gift" and deposit in the offering. Let's make this a joyous Christmas season for our dedicated employees, who do so much to keep our church going.



Gifts for the Staff

This is your church, and you have the right to know how we are doing financially at any time. So, if you have any questions, no matter how big or how small, regarding the budget or finances of the church, I strongly encourage you to ask. You will get your answer.

May God continue to guide and bless our church.

—David Mosley, Finance Subcommittee Chair

Open House Evenings during December

Our church will be open in December on Friday and Saturday nights, 6:00–8:00 pm during Christmas in Catlin Court (see box at right). We will have some musical events during these evenings, such as the cantata. Plan now to join us for these special nights. If you are willing to help welcome visitors, please contact Rebecca Curless in the church office, 623-939-1409 (menu option 2) or Genny Riner at church or during the week, 928-451-1545.

Glendale's holiday light display in Murphy Park (November 19 thru January 9, 2021) includes a 20-foot walkthrough snowman and a 30-foot tree with lights that dance to the music. Throughout the holidays, the park and downtown will be filled with music, song, dance and fun. Every Friday and Saturday in December community groups will take the stage at the Murphy Park Amphitheater with free holiday performances. For a lineup visit www.glendaleaz.com/downtownindecember

Christmas in Catlin Court

Join us for the Inaugural Christmas in Catlin Court
Friday and Saturday nights Dec. 3-18 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Enjoy a hometown holiday experience throughout the century-old National Register District featuring thousands of twinkling holiday lights. Walk along the tree-lined streets and enjoy dozens of beautiful historic buildings which are home to locally owned shops and restaurants.

- Visit with Santa Claus
- Arts and Crafts
- Carolers and Choirs
- Artisan Demonstrations
- Life-sized Gingerbread House
- Holiday Characters roaming the area
- Annual Patriotic Community Tree which honors our Military
- The Spicery's Traditional Christmas Dinners (reservations required)

And...many more merry activities
(Some activities are scheduled for select evenings.)



Start at the Arizona Information Center located at 5836 W. Palmyre Ave. to pick up the walking map. Admission and parking are free.

For more information, visit www.CatlinCourt.com
Christmas in Catlin Court is sponsored by the area business community.

PEACE *LOVE* HOPE *JESUS* PEACE *LOVE* HOPE *JESUS*



From the Board
of Trustees

The First United Methodist Church of Glendale has a tradition of loaning chairs and tables to church members. The uses have been from large family gatherings to garage sales, and everything in between. To continue this tradition, the following needs to happen. When you need chairs and/or tables, contact any trustee. They will need your name, telephone number, what you need and date of return. These are not new rules, just restating them.

At the last Trustee meeting, we selected a contractor to install gates and fencing at the administrative office entrance. Actual installation will be in 6-8 weeks.

The church had a work day on Saturday, November 20. Thank to everyone who came out and helped us. We were able to set up for the Thanksgiving dinner, wash the windows in Fellowship Hall, and install new fans in the Sanctuary.

Merry Christmas from the Riner Assistance Office

We successfully provided 30 Thanksgiving food boxes this past week along with 90 sack lunches, and now we are looking toward Christmas. This year we are trying to keep it simple. We will be providing food boxes once again with all the fixings for a nice Christmas dinner as well as food for a week. We will be focusing on meeting people's basic needs.

We can always use canned food, we are in need of men's and women's socks and tee shirts as well as gently used jackets and sweatshirts. If you can donate any of these items, please bring them to the church and put them in the box in the narthex, or bring to the office on Mondays or Tuesdays, 11:00 am—2:00 pm.

We at the Riner Office would like to thank you for your continued support, and wish you all a blessed and joyous Christmas.



Thanksgiving food boxes containing a full turkey dinner and additional meals.

December 5: Second Sunday of Advent

Message: *When the Word Comes*

Read: Luke 3: 1-6

December 12: Third Sunday of Advent

Message: *Santa and the Saint*

Read: Luke 1:39-55

December 19: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Choral Cantata: *Take Me Back to Bethlehem*

Arranged by Mason Brown and Russell Mauldin

Read: Luke 2:1-7

December 24: Christmas Eve

5:00 pm—Young People's Christmas Program

Message: *The Evening News*

Read: Luke 2:8-20

7:00 pm—Candlelight Worship Service

11:00 pm—Candlelight Worship Service with Communion

Message: *Coming to Stay*

Read: Isaiah 9:6, Luke 2:1-7

December 26: Sunday of Christmas

A Christmas Hymn Sing

(celebrating Christ's birth with favorite hymns)

Read: Isaiah 9:6, Luke 2:8-14





ORDER YOUR Poinsettias

The glory and celebration of Christ’s birth is made more beautiful by the traditional red poinsettias which decorate our church on Christmas Eve.

Perhaps you would like to order poinsettias in honor or in memory of loved ones this year. Poinsettias will be placed on the Chancel and may be taken home after the 11:00 pm service on Christmas Eve. We will have poinsettia order forms in the narthex on Sundays. You can also contact Rebecca in the office at rebecca@glendalefirstumc.com for a form to fill out, or to place an order. All poinsettias must be ordered by December 13.

Deadline for the next issue is
December 13. Your items for the
newsletter should be submitted
to the church office by 3:00 pm.
email:
rebecca@glendalefirstumc.com
fax: 623-236.9284

First Class
Postage Here

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

First United Methodist Church
7102 North 58th Drive
Glendale, AZ 85301-2434