



MISSION  
"MAKING DISCIPLES OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
FOR THE  
TRANSFORMATION OF  
THE WORLD"

VISION  
"A BRIGHT BEACON OF  
GOD'S LOVE TO IRVING  
AND BEYOND"

First United Methodist Church  
211 West Third Street  
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Connexion 15 Issue 11



# CONNEXION

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## The Light Shines in the Darkness

*"The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them a light has shown.*

Isaiah 9:2

Last year at this time I was writing an upbeat letter about the joys of Christmas. How different this year feels! Yet, Scripture reminds us that in dark times, God's light still shines!

The passage referenced above was written by the prophet Isaiah during very difficult times in the history of the Israelite people. Most of the nation had turned away from God. The prophets warned that even darker times were coming if the people did not turn back to God. In the midst of the perilous times, God made a promise through Isaiah! A light will shine in the darkness. That light will be, Jesus, the Son of God! "For unto us a child is born ... and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

When a room is completely dark, the smallest light can make the biggest difference. Jesus Christ, the light of the world (John 8:12), brightens up even the darkest of times. Lighting the Advent candles reminds us of what we receive through Jesus. Jesus offers us **Hope**: we are secure because we know God is working for our good. Jesus shows us **Love**: we generously love others because God first loved us. Jesus gives us **Joy**: we have a deep joy that does not depend upon circumstances. Jesus grants us **Peace**: we have a peace that passes all understanding allowing us to be instruments of peace in this world. Jesus is the **Christ**: we are saved through Jesus' live, death and resurrection, and that is the greatest news of all!

As the Light of the world, Jesus then says to each one of us: "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Christ's light shining through us can light the world! Let your light shine! Be people of Hope! Be people who Love! Be people who live with great Joy! Be people who are at Peace! Be people who have the light of Christ shining through them into a dark world! Remember, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5).

Have a very blessed Christmas season.

Doug

P.S. Let's finish the year financially strong! Although the church office will be closed starting at 1:00 pm on Christmas Eve, gifts can be made during Sunday worship or our Christmas Eve services. Also, Jimmy Bellew will have the financial office open 9:00 – 1:00 on Wednesday, December 30, and Thursday, December 31 for 2020 giving. Of course, checks can be dropped off any time in our secure mailbox or giving can be made on-line at [www.fumcirving.org/giving](http://www.fumcirving.org/giving).

## ONLINE GIVING



<http://www.fumcirving.org>

**Jeff Baker Memorial New Testament Bible Reading Challenge**

We are in the home stretch of the Jeff Baker Memorial New Testament Bible Reading Challenge! We will be finishing up with Revelation! Revelation begins with a blessing. “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy” (Rev. 1:2). However, understanding everything in Revelation is simply not possible. Everything will be finally revealed in the end, and if everything has not been revealed, then it is not the end! Yet, you will be blessed simply in the reading of Revelation! To help, though, here are a few tips for reading Revelation.

- Read for the overall message. Don't get too bogged down in the details.
- In the seven letters to the churches (Rev. 1:4 – 3:22), look for the ways the churches are commended and the ways the churches are warned. How would our church compare with these churches?
- Notice the wonder, power, and majesty of God in Revelation.
- Look for the many times and the many ways that worship and prayer is portrayed in Revelation. Let Revelation encourage your worship and prayer!
- Just like there was order in the beginning (the seven days of creation in Genesis 1), there is order in the end of times (seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls). We may not understand all the details, but there is the overarching theme that God is in control.
- Although Revelation is filled with strong images of judgement, look for how many times God seeks to have the people turn to him and look for how many times the people turn away from God. Always in Revelation, those who trust in God will be saved.
- Jesus is represented in many ways: the Lamb of God (throughout Revelation), the child born to the woman (Rev. 12), and the Rider on the white horse (Rev. 19:11-21). Look for the various ways that Jesus is exalted. You may find phrases throughout Revelation that are used in our worship services and hymns.
- Satan is the great deceiver who will be ultimately destroyed in the end. Satan cannot create but can only counterfeit. In Revelation 12 – 13, the Holy Trinity of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is counterfeited by the unholy trio of the dragon (Satan), the first beast (the antichrist), and the second beast (who makes people worship the first beast). In Revelation 20, Satan is ultimately defeated. Until then, keep watch!
- If you read nothing else, definitely read Revelation 21 – 22! You may notice elements of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2) that were lost when Adam and Eve sinned are restored in the new heaven and earth. What a glorious heaven being prepared for us!
- Advent is the season when we prepare for the coming of the baby Jesus and we prepare for the second coming of the victorious Christ! Hear the last words in the Bible: “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen” (Rev. 22:20-21).

Week	Reading
Nov 30 – Dec 5	1, 2, & 3 John
Dec 6 - 12	Jude 1 & Revelation 1-4
Dec 13 – 19	Revelation 5-11

Week	Reading
Dec 20 – 26	Revelation 12-18
Dec 27 – 31	Revelation 19-23
Happy New Year!!	

The Sack Lunch Program would like to say a big thank you to Roger & Janet Knapp for the donation of “necessity bags” for our homeless people. The bags were handed out during the week of Thanksgiving. The people were very grateful for this nice surprise. There is a plan to do this again at Christmas.

**MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS**

NOVEMBER 2020

**In Memory of MaryLou Niethamer**

to A/C Fund from Pam & Allan Knott  
to General Budget from Dick & Jeanell Bischofhausen

**In Memory of Anne & Tom Uhr**

to General Budget from Dick & Jeanell Bischofhausen  
to General Budget from Nancy Smith

**In Memory of Theresa Bowers**

to General Budget from Dick & Jeanell Bischofhausen

**In Memory of Bettye Jennings**

to A/C Fund from Sammy Hargrove  
to A/C Fund from Allan & Pam Knott  
to General Budget from Dick & Jeanell Bischofhausen

**In Memory of Phyllis Stowe**

to General Budget from Dick & Jeanell Bischofhausen  
to Wednesday Work Crew from Sara Patrey

**In Memory Walter B. Smith**

to Choir Fund from Ron & Maryla Zimmerman  
to General Budget from Carolyn Chamberlain

**In Memory Dorothy Chandler**

to A/C Fund from Jimmy & Christine Burkett  
to Choir Fund from Mary & Paul Good

**In Memory Ann Cox**

to General Budget from Sue Burk & family  
to General Budget from Donald & Elizabeth Bray  
to General budget from Julia Brenner

**In Memory of Lecil Moore**

to General Budget from Jimmy & Christine Burkett  
to General Budget from David & Cecilia Webb  
to A/C Fund from Bill & Mary Holcomb

**In Memory of:**

**Reba Wheeler, Mickey Wheeler’s mother**, to A/C Fund from Allan & Pam Knott  
**Georgia Orr** to A/C Fund from Allan & Pam Knott  
**Marione Steinbruck** to General Budget from Jerry Wicks  
**Alice Lou Hocker** to Choir Fund from Paul & Mary Good



# Parent's Day Out



This year has been full of ups and downs in most of our lives a little more than normal. But there is "positive" and meaning from our Lord in everything - if we take the time to see it. Working with the kids is a true "gift" from God. It takes special people to be teachers on any level. But the rewards are tremendous! If you have never read Hans Christian Anderson's "The Fir-Tree" - Please make the time for it this season. In short, the Fir-Tree takes day to day occurrences for granted (the sun shining on him, children playing around him, etc) - only wanting to be taller so he can one day be chosen for someone's Christmas tree, full of decorations and beautifully decorated. Everyone adores him - but he is too nervous trying to be perfect. He tells himself that he will "enjoy it tomorrow." But the Christmas season is short and passes quickly and he is soon discarded. At every step of his life, he is surrounded by blessings from God but is too busy to appreciate all he has been given - even after longing for it.

Even in the tough times, we can appreciate all things, big and small. PDO wishes you the Merriest of Holidays and the time to ENJOY!! We also ask that you keep our program in prayer.

Sandi Parker  
PDO Director

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## MUSIC NOTES

### "THE SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS", December 13, Sunday at 10:30 am service

Every year, traditionally we used to have Christmas Cantata with orchestra and choir. Unfortunately, we are not able to do this year due to the COVID 19 situation. However, any circumstances cannot stop us to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Therefore, FUMC Irving Music Department will present the beauty of a traditional English service called, "Nine Lessons and Carols." The structure of the service is as simple as the title: nine passages of Scripture are followed by carols. But the content of those readings and the traditional way of conducting the service have become very meaningful to many people.

Since the choir cannot perform as a large group in the choir loft, there will be a variety of small groups including solos, Youth boys, and girls small group, Women's and Men's ensemble, Mixed small group, Children's small group and choir, and piano solo by Yeonok Lee. Of course, there will be congregation singing as well. I invite you to share our celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ on December 13, Sunday at 10:30 am service. If you are not able to attend there will be live streaming on Facebook: "FirstUnitedMethodistChurchIrving". If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [music@fumcirving.org](mailto:music@fumcirving.org)

David Lee  
Director of Music and Worship

## Refuge Youth

Hi everyone,

The season of Advent is upon us and I can't wait for Christmas. In a year where everything has been turned on its head I am so excited to know that Christ will come on Christmas morning. Our students have been hanging in there (some just barely), but we are getting by with love and prayers from one another and continued encouragement. We are looking forward to having a socially distanced Christmas get together here in a few weeks and are looking forward to starting off the next semester strong with some exciting new topics and discussions, confirmation, and hopefully a few fun events.

Please continue to be in prayer for our students and volunteers as well as their families as we continue to navigate this strange time we are living in.

Rev. Kyle Powell  
Associate Minister and Director of Youth Ministries  
First United Methodist Church Irving  
214-404-7984

Blessings to all,



Sunday November 29<sup>th</sup>, we finished the month of November and started our new church year. We finish the year giving thanks for what the Lord has given us. In our children's Sunday School, we have been studying Old Testament *blessings*. Blessings are all things given us by God. In December we will be studying *Joy* in

the birth of Jesus. Luke 1:46-47 "With all my heart I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my Savior."

My prayer for each of our church members is that we respect others by wearing our mask and washing our hands, but that we also know the Lord has blessing for us and through Him we can find true Joy. As we come into Advent, which is a time to prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming, remember to go to the Lord with your concerns. Our Prayer Team has seen God answer prayers. Give your desires to Him.

Blessings,  
Juanell Montoya  
Children's Director