



THE APPLESEED

DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

FROM A WELCOMING CHURCH... TO AN ONLINE-WORSHIPPING CHURCH

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR
WITH HOPE, PEACE, JOY, AND LOVE!**

*“Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.”*

“Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” – Isaiah 7:14

As we welcome December, we are also enjoying the Message of Incarnation, that Jesus was born into human history, at that precise moment, for the salvation of the world. This is what we seek to celebrate, to proclaim, and to manifest for all people in this special season of the church’s year of grace.

During Advent, we love to sing, “Come, thou long-expected Jesus, Born to set thy people free.” And then, during Christmas, we joyfully move on to Glory to the newborn King, Joy to the World, and more carols, hymns, and songs which enhance our happiness and sense of wonder. December 2020 will be so different from any other year we have lived through, due to the ongoing pandemic. A vaccine is yet to be approved, and at this time the virus is still rising.

In December we celebrate Advent as part of the Christmas Season. We amplify joy, hope, peace, and love throughout these weeks. We will transition from darkness to light, from yearning to deliverance, and to the manifestation of God’s coming in judgement and in life, giving to humanity. We have inherited a tradition to regard Christmas as emphasizing the incarnation -- in a narrower sense than its appropriate full richness of Word Made Flesh -- and manifest in Jesus Christ. So during Advent we prepare to anticipate, and be grateful for, the gift of Christ to us. This season calls us to a deeper spiritual relationship with Christ.; at the same time, it challenges us to create an environment of prayer, especially from the Book of Psalms and of Scripture, and through fellowship and sacramental actions.

Most Christians believe that the message of Christmas reveals that God dwells in our hearts. Love binds man to man as well as God to man. God instills divine nature into all people. This is the reality: that Jesus came to seek and save the lost, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and to establish his bounty here on earth, with peace and joy where hostility once ruled.

As we enjoy this season of Advent and Christmas, pray for those out there who are longing for warm beds, an extra change of clothes, or a hot meal during this challenging year. We are each of equal value to God, sharing the joy of His love and peace in the Christmas season with the God who is within us.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to you all.

From my family to yours -- “Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine: Love to God and all men, love for plead and gift and sign.” (UMH 242)

Shalom! – Pastor Iunisi Tovo

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From my family -- Finausina and myself -- to you all!
Thank you for everything, and for your support in 2020.
– Pastor Iunisi

A Song for Christmas -- in English and Tongan

TO GOD BE THE GLORY (UMH 98)

To God be the Glory, great things he hath done!
So loved he that world that he gave us his Son,
Who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

Great things he hath taught us,
Great things he hath done,
And great our rejoicing thru Jesus the Son;
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.

Refrain:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O Come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
And give him the glory,
Great things he hath done!

In Tongan:

'A hake Kainga mo Fakafeta'i
Tau fakamalo he mana ne fai
'I Petelihema he kuonga mu'a
'A e hoko tangata 'a hotau 'Otua

Taa mo kitaua ke fakafeta'i
He 'aho 'alo'i 'oku ta 'iai
Koe me'a tepuu e keta tukupaa
Ke mateaki'i 'a e Hau Tapuha

Refrain (Tau):

Fakafeta'i fakafeta'i ko e pehe ketau noa
Fakamalo he 'ofa hotau 'Otua
Ne tuku 'a Langi mo hono masani
'Kae ha'u 'o huhu'i 'a e Hia 'a Mamani.

*Let us praise God for blessings bestowed upon us, and that we are at the end of year 2020.
Ke tau kaunga kau kotoa he fiefia moe fakafeta'i 'etau a'usia e mahina faka'osi e ta'u 2020.*

Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!
Ke mou ma'u ha Kilisimasi Fiefia mo ha ta'u fo'ou Monu'ia....

JOHN WESLEY'S MEDITATION FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

To end this year and to begin a new year, let us be reminded of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, who said:

*“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can,
in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can,
as long as ever you can.”*

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”
Galatians 6:9 (ESV)

day one:

Lord God, we adore you because you still come to us now.

You come to us through other people and their love and concern for us.

You come to us through men and women who need our help.

You come to us as we worship you with your people.

– Caryl Micklem
from *Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship*

day two:

Steal away, steal away,
Steal away to Jesus!
Steal away, steal away home.

– Traditional African-American Spiritual (UMH 704), inspired by 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

day three:

i thank You God for most this amazing day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes

– ee cummings

day four:

Every day is a god, each day is a god,
and holiness holds forth in time.

– Annie Dillard

day five:

I heard from Heaven today,
I heard from Heaven today,
I thank God, and I thank you too,
I heard from Heaven today.

– Traditional American Spiritual

ADVENT-IN-PLACE

*25 days of
prayers, hymns,
and poems
to spark
contemplation
and wonder*

day six:

Though I am silent
there is singing around me.

Though I am dark
there is vision around me.

Though I am heavy
there is flight around me.

– Wendell Berry

day seven:

Wherever you set your feet is holy land.

– Wilfred Pelletier

day eight:

Come, Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

– Charles Wesley (UMH 196)

day nine:

All winter long
behind every thunder
guess what we heard?
behind every thunder
the song
of a bird,
a trumpeting bird

– Native American Song

day ten:

Fall of rain, evenfall, all all is blessing!

– Daniel Berrigan

more 

day eleven:

I've got peace like a river in my soul.

– Traditional African-American Spiritual

day twelve:

Now if you walk in darkest night,
look for His dawn that's breaking bright;
nothing shall ever stop this light
bringing new hope to all.

– Judy Gresham

day thirteen:

I am asking for the courage
to go forward through the shadow
I am asking toward the light!

– Mary Austin

day fourteen:

... this day again,
you led us wonder-fully...

– Ghanaian Christian Prayer

day fifteen:

Just to be is a blessing
Just to live is holy.

– Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

day sixteen:

Goodnight God
I hope that you are having a good time being
the world
I like the world very much.

– Danu Baxter, four-and-a-half years old

day seventeen:

Love came down at Christmas
Love all lovely,
Love Divine

Love was born at Christmas
Star and angels gave the sign.

– Christina Rossetti (UMH 242)

day eighteen:

God is a friend of silence. The trees, the
flowers, the plants grow in silence. The stars,
the sun, the moon move in silence. We can
touch our soul and others through silence.

– Mother Teresa

day nineteen:

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child.

Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

– Joseph Mohr (UMH 239)

day twenty:

Let nothing disturb thee,
Nothing affright thee;
All things are passing;
God never changeth;
Patient endurance
Attaineth to all things;
Who God possesseth
In nothing is wanting;
Alone God sufficeth.

– Teresa of Avila

day twenty-one:

I can scarcely wait till tomorrow
when a new life begins for me,
as it does each day
as it does each day.

– Stanley Kunitz

day twenty-four:

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting
light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met
in thee tonight.

– Phillips Brooks (UMH 230)

day twenty-two:

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

– Isaiah 9:2

day twenty-five:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his
shoulder, and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

– Isaiah 9:6

day twenty-three:

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him, I will give my heart.

– Christina Rossetti

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Hope • Peace • Joy • Love

text selections by Vicky Ness



BEAUTIFUL MUSIC FOR THE SEASON

Our Director of Music, Jim Johnson, has created downloadable digital files of the pieces performed during the 2019 Holiday Concert!

click this link!

<https://u.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZSGmLXZiBSiAe6rBih54L4XTwvPImDb4w57>

(this link should work for everyone who is reading this newsletter online and in PDF form)

DAILY READINGS DECEMBER 2020

Tuesday, December 1, 2020: Psalm 79; Micah 4:6-13;
Revelation 18:1-10

Wednesday, December 2, 2020: Psalm 79; Micah 5:1-5a;
Luke 21:34-38

Thursday, December 3, 2020: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; Hosea 6:1-6;
1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

Friday, December 4, 2020: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;
Jeremiah 1:4-10; Acts 11:19-26

Saturday, December 5, 2020: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;
Ezekiel 36:24-28; Mark 11:27-33

Sunday, December 6, 2020: Second Sunday of Advent

Monday, December 7, 2020: Psalm 27; Isaiah 26:7-15;
Acts 2:37-42

Tuesday, December 8, 2020: Psalm 27; Isaiah 4:2-6;
Acts 11:1-18

Wednesday, December 9, 2020: Psalm 27; Malachi 2:10-3:1;
Luke 1:5-17

Thursday, December 10, 2020: Psalm 126; Habakkuk 2:1-5;
Philippians 3:7-11

Friday, December 11, 2020: Psalm 126; Habakkuk 3:2-6;
Philippians 3:12-16

Saturday, December 12, 2020: Psalm 126; Habakkuk 3:13-19;
Matthew 21:28-32

Sunday, December 13, 2020: Third Sunday of Advent

Monday, December 14, 2020: Psalm 125; 1 Kings 18:1-18;
Ephesians 6:10-17

Tuesday, December 15, 2020: Psalm 125; 2 Kings 2:9-22;
Acts 3:17-4:4

Wednesday, December 16, 2020: Psalm 125;
Malachi 3:16-4:6; Mark 9:9-13

Thursday, December 17, 2020: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26;
2 Samuel 6:1-11; Hebrews 1:1-4

Friday, December 18, 2020: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26;
2 Samuel 6:12-19; Hebrews 1:5-14

Saturday, December 19, 2020: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26;
Judges 13:2-24; John 7:40-52

Sunday, December 20, 2020: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Monday, December 21, 2020: Luke 1:46b-55;
1 Samuel 1:1-18; Hebrews 9:1-14

Tuesday, December 22, 2020: Luke 1:46b-55;
1 Samuel 1:19-28; Hebrews 8:1-13

Wednesday, December 23, 2020: Luke 1:46b-55;
1 Samuel 2:1-10; Mark 11:1-11

Thursday, December 24 & 25, 2020: Nativity of the Lord -
Proper I

Thursday, December 24 & 25, 2020: Nativity of the Lord -
Proper II

Thursday, December 24 & 25, 2020: Nativity of the Lord -
Proper III

Saturday, December 26, 2020: Psalm 148;
Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15; Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60

Sunday, December 27, 2020: First Sunday after Christmas
Day

Monday, December 28, 2020: Psalm 148;
Jeremiah 31:15-17; Matthew 2:13-18

Tuesday, December 29, 2020: Psalm 148; Isaiah 49:5-15;
Matthew 12:46-50

Wednesday, December 30, 2020: Psalm 148;
Proverbs 9:1-12; 2 Peter 3:8-13

Thursday, December 31, 2020: Psalm 148; 1 Kings 3:5-14;
John 8:12-19

Friday, January 1, 2021: New Year's Day

Saturday, January 2, 2021: Psalm 148; Proverbs 1:1-7;
James 3:13-18

Sunday, January 3, 2021: Second Sunday after
Christmas Day



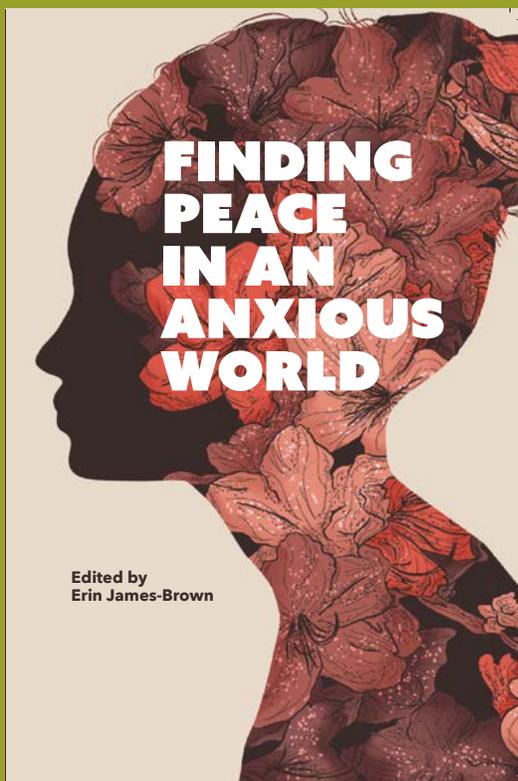
NEW ZOOM STUDY FOR ADVENT

We will begin a new study on Tuesday, December 1 at 2:00 pm and continue for 3 more Tuesdays, December 8, 15 and 22. We will be using the book *Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, a 2020 Spiritual Growth Study through the Mission U of the United Methodist Women. This study is by the staff of the Urban Village Church and uses the book of Proverbs and “The Serenity Prayer” as a guide to help Christians find their way through anxiety, worry and fear and move towards God’s peace that surpasses all understanding. Using the Serenity Prayer as a scaffold, *Finding Peace in an Anxious World* explores ways to discover peace through scriptural disciplines so that we can be rooted in God and energized to live fully as disciples of Christ.

Please let Carol Wegner, carolwegner@yahoo.com, know if you plan to participate.

Here is a link to the hard copy of the book: https://www.umwmissionresources.org/shopping_product_detail.asp?pid=53481

It is available on Kindle only through Amazon.



A DELICIOUS TRIBUTE

Susan Kinder is preparing an article and booklet to honor Jennie Cheshier’s memory and to celebrate her love of good food and hospitality. If you have a favorite “Jennie recipe” and/or an anecdote, please contact Susan to share them – if you can’t find the actual recipe, Susan can track it down for you.

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susankinder@comcast.net

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· ALL SERVICES AND MEETINGS
ON CHURCH GROUNDS
CONTINUE TO BE SUSPENDED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE ·

by order of our Bishop

DECEMBER 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<i>"Sebastopol UMC" is our YouTube channel</i>		1 Zoom Advent Study 2pm	2	3 Zoom Fellowship 2pm	4	5
6 Worship online <i>SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i>	7	8 Zoom Advent Study 2pm	9	10 Zoom Fellowship 2pm	11	12
13 Worship online <i>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i>	14	15 Zoom Advent Study 2pm	16	17 Zoom Fellowship 2pm	18	19
· PLEASE SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE NEXT APPLESEED THIS WEEK!! THANK YOU ·						
20 Worship online <i>FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i>	21	22 Zoom Advent Study 2pm	23	24 <i>CHRISTMAS EVE</i>	25 <i>CHRISTMAS DAY</i>	26 Saturday Table
27 Worship online <i>FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS</i>	28	29	30	31 Zoom Fellowship 2pm	1	2
						<i>JANUARY 2021 HAPPY NEW YEAR</i>

SCRIP IS AVAILABLE NOW! PAT WILL DELIVER TO YOU!

Need SCRIP? Pat Schoch can take your order by phone and deliver it to you!

Please call 707-823-3889

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