



DUNWOODY  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# ADVENT Devotional

2025

# MATTHEW

By Sid Linton

## **Matthew 1:23**

*"Look. the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us.]"*

## **Matthew 28:20**

*"..And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Today is the first day of Advent and the first day of Year A of the 3-year Bible reading cycle called the Revised Common Lectionary. The Lectionary Cycle has weekly selections from the Old Testament, the Psalms, Letters, and of course the Gospels. Year A focuses on the Gospel of Matthew.

What sets Matthew apart? Together with Mark and Luke, it's one of the 3 Synoptic Gospels—that is, "seen through the same eye"; John stands alone. In Matthew, after his ancestry, birth, baptism, and temptation, Jesus begins his ministry with the calling of his first Disciples—Andrew, Peter, James. This is followed by the Sermon on the Mount (think Beatitudes), which begins the first of what Bible scholars call the 5 major discourses of Matthew, each of which ends with, "When Jesus had finished..." The five discourses are sayings of Jesus and include basic beliefs in Chapters 5-7, instructions to his Disciples in Chapter 10, and some great parables in Chapter 13.

The fourth discourse in Chapters 16-18 is interesting because Jesus names Peter the Rock on which he'll build his Church (Chapter 16:17-19). Then, only a few verses later in 16:23 lashes out at Peter saying, "Get thee behind me Satan!" The fifth, or Olivet, discourse (Chapters 23-25) includes the "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees..." warnings to the Jewish leadership and with a mini-apocalypse warns all about the end of days, the coming of the Son of Man, and the need for watchfulness. There is more good stuff after that, including my favorite—the "least of these" passage in 25:40, before the Passion story in Chapters 26-28.

Matthew is a great read, either in short bursts or in long passages. And, it is worth your time to refresh it in your memory. Since Matthew has one of the birth stories: the Wise Men, Chapters 1:18-2:23 read that first, of course. (Luke has the other one with the manger, shepherds, and angels). But then to begin your review of Matthew, start with page 6 of the pew Bible, (Chapter 6:7-7:1) which is a small but rich trove of Christian basics: the Lord's Prayer, the lilies of the field, serving two masters, and judging others. The preceding and following pages are just as rich with the Beatitudes, charity, loving your enemies, the Golden Rule, and importantly, the Calling of Matthew.

### **Prayer (from Matthew 6:9-1)**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial but rescue us from the evil one. Amen.

### **Today's Thought**

Do yourself a favor and read a bit of Matthew. Again.

## BUILDING TRADITIONS

By Tambryn Freund

### **Matthew 13:31-32**

*“God’s kingdom is like an acorn that a farmer plants. It is quite small as seeds go, but in the course of years it grows into a huge oak tree, and eagles build nests in it.”*

You’re never going to believe it, but I am a huge proponent of Advent calendars for kids, along with all the pre-Christmas chaos. Unwrapping something every day is a hallmark of the Freund holiday season. But wait you say, isn’t that just giving kids more junk and distracting from the reason for the season? Let’s talk.

If you strip it down, Christmas is someone else’s birthday. You’re supposed to read the Bible more or pray more leading up to it, and it prompts families to go sit in church more weekends in December PLUS a bonus service (or more) on Christmas eve. If you haven’t hung out with kids recently, you’ll know that kids are AWFUL at doing things just because they are supposed to. However, kids are great at receiving treats, gifts, and fun. So, if we add some unwrapping to Advent here’s what you get. It’s a lot like the story of planting seeds we hear in Matthew 13. A little thing here and there grows into something bigger.

A daily Advent toy, candy, or special activity to unwrap = moments to stop and recognize the season daily. Extra movie time watching Christmas favorites = family or quiet time spent hearing messages of hope and love. Cookie baking = time spent making something for others as a group or family sharing the workload as a team. So many events = moments where we recognize this unique season in a larger community.

Family Christmas Eve services = an interactive telling of a story that kicks off our Christian year and resets our hearts to Jesus. Interactive (and sometimes loud) storytelling creates sticky stories kids remember.

As an adult, so many of the things I love about Christmas are based in habits I established as a kid or with kids. Instilling good habits and meaningful traditions in childhood gives us something familiar to fall back on as we grow into faithful adults. But what can we do in adulthood to grow our faith? Do you have meaningful traditions at this time of year that push you closer to God? Do you have things you do every year that DON’T tie back to God that you could re-wrap to add more meaning to them? Maybe you can add a little prayer moment right before you light a fire to relax. Maybe you can invite a friend to church when you drop off cookies to them. Connecting with God doesn’t have to be grand it just has to be part of the fabric of your life to be meaningful.

### **Prayer**

God help me to find moments in all the Advent work to connect back to you. Help me to see you in the traditions and moments of the season. Amen.

### **Today’s Thought**

Connecting with God doesn’t have to be grand, it just has to be part of the fabric of your life to be meaningful.

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

## AN ETERNAL GIFT

By Nick Almand

### 2 Corinthians 9:15

*"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"*

Every December, we gather around the tree, eyes bright with anticipation, ready to unwrap the gifts waiting beneath its branches. There's something sacred in that moment—the feelings of togetherness, the gasp of surprise, the joy of giving and receiving. But beyond the boxes and bows lies a deeper invitation: to unwrap Christmas itself.

We often treat Christmas as a season to be managed—a checklist of shopping, decorating, and cooking. Yet the heart of Christmas isn't something we can buy or schedule. It's something we must unwrap with care: the mystery of God's love, made flesh in Jesus Christ.

When the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem, they didn't find a wrapped-up treasure or a royal display. They found a baby, wrapped in simple cloth, lying in a manger. The greatest gift the world has ever known came not in gold or glitter, but in humanity and humility. To truly unwrap Christmas, we have to peel back the layers of noise and busyness until we arrive, again, at the manger.

Unwrapping Christmas means slowing down enough to see what God is doing in our midst. It means unwrapping our own hearts—making room for Christ where clutter has crept in. It means remembering that the gift isn't meant to stay unopened, admired from afar, or packed away with the ornaments come January. It's meant to be received, cherished, and shared.

In the Methodist tradition, we speak of grace—prevenient, justifying, sanctifying—as the way God's love reaches out, transforms us, and calls us to serve. Christmas is grace in its purest form: God taking on our humanity so that we might share in His divinity. When we unwrap Christmas, we unwrap grace itself. We see how God meets us where we are, not where we pretend to be.

Maybe this year, unwrapping Christmas looks like forgiving someone you've held at a distance. Maybe it's setting aside a few quiet minutes each day for prayer or scripture. Maybe it's serving a meal, writing a note, or simply choosing to love when it would be easier to ignore. Every act of kindness becomes another layer peeled away, another glimpse of the Christ child shining through.

The real joy of Christmas doesn't fade when the wrapping paper is thrown away. It deepens as we continue to unwrap it throughout the year—in worship, in service, in love. Because the gift of Jesus isn't seasonal, it's eternal.

### Prayer

Lord, help me to unwrap Your presence this Christmas. Let me see You in every gift, every person, every quiet moment. Thank You for Jesus—the gift beyond words. Amen.

### Today's Thought

May your Christmas be more than merry—may it be holy. And may you discover, once again, the joy that can't be boxed, the peace that can't be wrapped, and the Savior who will never stop giving Himself to you.

## LOOK FOR THE STAR

By Lynn Walker Gendusa

### Luke 2:9

*“An angel appeared among the shepherds watching their flocks of sheep,  
and the landscape shone bright with the glory of the Lord...”*

When I was a small child, my family rented a home on a large farm. Behind our house was a pasture filled with livestock. Each afternoon, I would walk to the wooden fence and talk to my "pets."

I never slept well on Christmas Eve, which often agitated my mother. "Lynn, go to sleep! Now!" she would yell when she heard me sneaking around the house trying to catch Santa in action.

My friends and family know that I still feel and act like a child at Christmas. There is, however, an explanation for this.

On a frigid Christmas Eve at the farm, I thought I heard Santa's sleigh land on the roof. I jumped out of bed and ran to the window, my heart racing as I pressed my nose against the cold glass.

I didn't see the reindeer, but I could see the cows peacefully lying in the field. An enormous star gleamed in the distance and was so bright it illuminated the pasture and all its inhabitants.

At just six years old, I was convinced that Jesus was born behind our house, even though it seemed too far for me to reach Him. At that time, I believed that Christ was born every year and that God had chosen our land to celebrate His birth on Christmas Eve in 1953.

I have no idea what I received from Santa that year, but today, I can still see the star, the animals, and feel the cold as I watch the star hovering over the land.

Jesus was born for us and walks with us through all the days of our lives. We are God's children, and our wonder of His glory must never grow old.

### Prayer

As we celebrate your birth, help us remember to honor the gift of You each day of the year through the way we live. Amen.

### Today's Thought

This Christmas, take a moment to embrace the wonder and joy of being like a child, celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Thursday, December 4, 2025

# COUNTDOWN TO HOPE, PEACE, JOY, AND LOVE

By Randy Pilkenton

## Romans 15:13

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

Advent is the Church's way of counting down—not to a sale, but to a Savior. While the rest of the world might be tangled up in tinsel and one-day shipping, we Christians are invited into something quieter and deeper: the waiting that fills our hearts with hope, peace, joy, and love.

Hope begins our season. It is that spark that brings forth light in the darkness, the steady belief that God's promises still hold. Even when schedules are packed and patience is short, hope tells us that Christ is near. As the verse in Romans 15 tells us, the realization of this hope can fill us with joy and peace when we trust in Him.

Then comes peace. As we know in our modern times, this can be a very rare commodity in December! Yet true peace isn't found in perfect plans or quiet homes, but in trusting a God who calms the chaos. When our minds get distracted with noise and stress, Advent reminds us to pause and breathe: "Peace, be still."

Joy follows close behind. Not the temporary kind that fades after the last delicious holiday cookie is gone, but the joy of knowing Emmanuel—God with us—has come to stay. We are made more open to the true "Joy of the Season" when we remember that salvation isn't something we earn, but something freely given.

And love crowns them all. Love is the reason behind every candle, carol, and kind deed this season. The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem proves that God didn't stay distant but instead he stayed with us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit breathes into us an unlimited capacity for love. We can certainly give our love during Advent, but we should remember that the capacity is also there for us to extend our love every day thereafter.

So, this Advent, wait well—with eyes lifted, heart open, and maybe a cup of warm cocoa in hand. Christ is coming, and that changes everything.

## Prayer

In Jesus's name we pray that during this Advent season we will be "waiters" – waiting while filling up with Hope, Peace, Joy and Love that we can use abundantly all of the days following. We are grateful for this and all the blessings You have given us. We pray that we use them well. Amen.

## Today's Thought

This Advent, wait well—with eyes lifted, heart open. Christ is coming, and that changes everything!

## THE KINGDOM IS NOW

By Kelly Ellis

### Luke 17:21

*"The kingdom of God is within you."*

Advent reminds us to prepare our hearts for Christ's coming—not only as a baby in Bethlehem or as the returning King, but as the living presence of God at work in and through us today. Jesus's message was clear: the Kingdom of God is not something distant, waiting to be revealed after death. It is here, now, unfolding wherever love reigns, mercy is extended, and justice is pursued.

I catch glimpses of that Kingdom every week in my ESOL classroom. There, brothers and sisters in Christ from many nations gather—different languages, cultures, and stories, yet united in purpose. I see the Kingdom when one student gently translates for another, when laughter bridges what words cannot, when a newcomer is welcomed with open arms, when meals are shared in celebration, and rides home or to work are offered when needed. It is in the shared smiles and helping hands that I see God's love made visible. No one is overlooked or unseen; every act of kindness becomes holy ground.

When Jesus healed the sick, welcomed the outcast, and fed the hungry, He showed us what the Kingdom looks like. It's not confined to church walls or someday promises; it is built through the compassion of God's people—through us. Each act of kindness, each open hand, each effort to bring unity among all nations becomes a living testimony that God's Kingdom is among us.

To live as the hands and feet of Christ means choosing love over indifference, inclusion over exclusion, and action over apathy. The Kingdom advances not with grand gestures, but with everyday faithfulness—in listening, serving, forgiving, and seeing every person as a beloved child of God.

During this Advent season, may we not only wait for Christ—may we walk with Him, building the Kingdom right where we stand.

### Prayer

Lord, let me see Your Kingdom in the faces around me. Help me live each day as Your hands and feet, spreading love that knows no borders. May my words and actions reveal that Your Kingdom is here and now. In Jesus's name, Amen.

### Today's Thought

During this Advent season, may we not only wait for Christ—may we walk with Him, building the Kingdom right where we stand.

Saturday, December 6, 2025

## THE BEST GIFT EVER

By Margaret Sherman

### 2 Corinthians 9:15

*"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift."*

My children went to Austin Elementary back in the day when German was taught. I'm sure some of yours did too. If so, do you remember *Nikolaustag*? It's a German tradition celebrated on December 6th when children place shoes on the hearth to be filled with small gifts and sweets by Saint Nicholas that night. Austin students often made little shoes out of construction paper for the event. Some of the traditional items to include in the shoes are chocolate coins, chocolate Santas, oranges, nuts, and gingerbread men.

This tradition dates back to an actual historical figure, Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra, who lived in Asia Minor around AD 343. He is known for his charity and generosity in providing food, clothing and donations for the poor and needy. One of the more famous legends about him is this: When Nicholas learned that a poor man was having to sell his three daughters as servants, or worse, Nicholas secretly came to the man's house at night. He threw three bags of gold coins, one for each daughter, into the house, so that the girls could afford dowries and be married instead. Some versions say the bags of gold coins landed in the girl's shoes or stockings drying by the fire. Some say he dropped the gold through the open smoke vent found on the rooftops of houses in that era. This act of generosity inspired the custom of hanging stockings by the chimney on Christmas Eve in the USA and other countries, and the *Nikolaustag* tradition of leaving shoes on the hearth in Germany.

In continuation of this tradition, we love to give gifts at Christmas time—especially to children! There's no gift we wouldn't give them for Christmas if it's within our power. (I particularly recall driving all over Atlanta one year, searching for a certain pair of pink rollerblades, in the days before Amazon delivery—the trauma is with me still!) Yet no present we can ever give comes close to the gift we were given that first Christmas Eve. Nothing we can stuff in a shoe or a stocking, nothing we can wrap in a box with a bow and place under a tree, nothing we can drop down a chimney, will ever equal the gift of Jesus's birth—God revealing himself to us in human form in order to reconcile us to himself. There are simply not enough words of wonder in our language to fully describe this incredible present. It really is the best gift ever. And we don't have to run around like crazy looking for it, or overtax our credit cards, or jump through hoops to earn it. This Gift has already been given, freely, to all who will simply believe.

### Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for the indescribable Gift of your son! Help me to share this Gift with the world, so that others may receive him too! Amen.

### Today's Thought

May the hope and promise of Jesus's birth, and the charitable example of Saint Nicholas, inspire your heart this Christmas season.

## DO YOU LIKE WAITING?

By Rev. H. David Melton

### James 5:7-8

*"Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near."*

Waiting isn't much fun, is it? The passage above from the Book of James is about waiting. When we find it hard to wait, the letter of James says we should think of farmers who have lots of patience. They plant seeds and wait for a long time for the plants to grow and be ready for harvest. They trust that things will work out and there will be a plentiful crop.

During this season of Advent, we are told to be patient, but it does not mean that we stay asleep or are inactive in slumber. We are to remain steadfast, to settle in for the long haul, to guard against a loss of preparation. James calls on us to be at a high level of readiness.

Recently, I was talking with a member of our congregation about the community of Dunwoody "at a time gone by." He stated that the world has changed a lot over the years. We are anxious people, who are accustomed to setting our own agendas and itineraries. We want the kingdom to come, but on our time schedule. He said, "We need to calm our spirits and rebuke our own willfulness. We need to remember that God's Kingdom is a gift that we need to be willing to receive on God's good time, not ours. We need to pray that God gives us the gift of patience and steadfastness." How true he is!

May we all pray for God's joy during this Advent season. May God fill us with the calm that keeps us focused and waiting for the Messiah. May each of us serve as examples to all those around us of the peace that comes with the birth of Christ. May we be the beacons of joy and peace that filled the manger and now fill our hearts.

### Prayer

God, we pray out of a profound sense of joy that Jesus comes to bring us life in all of its fullness. We present ourselves in the service of the kingdom that is ushered in by the birth of Jesus. We come into the Sanctuary with a sense of expectation. We come into the presence of God full of hope and anticipation. We come, waiting upon God and the fullness of time. Let us worship! Amen.

### Today's Thought

Patience is required of all people of faith. We are called to live out our faith in an atmosphere of patient waiting.

## ARNIE'S STORY

By Sheryl Winton

### Galatians 5:6

*"The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."*

My name is Arnie. I was sitting in the doctor's office, separated from my family, out of work, and busted financially. The doctor estimated I had 3-6 months to live. I felt helpless. But as we sat there in his office, he casually asked, "What will you do, Arnie? What do you want to do? Be realistic; acknowledge and accept your limitations."

I really hadn't thought about it. I had nothing, of course. How could I accomplish something in a short period of time that I hadn't been able to accomplish during my whole life up to this point. I was in a daze. I hadn't realized that there were some things I could do, even some things I must do—like contact people I loved and cared about and tell them how special they are. I had been too preoccupied or frightened or just plain lazy.

"What do you want to do?" the doctor persisted. "Who would deny a dying man the right to act silly, or to express his love of God and man, or to enjoy the companionship of children?" Suddenly I became aware of all the opportunities to do what I wanted to do. The next time I have a humorous thought, I'm going to say it. I'm going to wink and make faces and talk to children when their parents allow. I can give up my seat to a senior citizen or hold a door open for someone. I will send cards and give hugs and show those people around me that I love them. Who would deny a dying man the right to be himself—or a "living" man for that matter?

Some time had passed after my conversation with the doctor, when I realized I was responsible for my own life. I didn't know where to start. Then one night at the check-out counter of my supermarket, I joked that "A bachelor's work is never done." The cashier smiled! Success! Slowly, small risks at first so as not to reopen my long-suffering wounds, just now beginning to heal. Since that night I have done many of the things I wanted to do and several more I didn't know I wanted to do. I've been blessed with the company of children. One particular time when Jim allowed me to "babysit" his daughter on a trip to the zoo, I was fortunate to spend time visiting the most wonderful little person you'll ever want to meet. I invited a friend over for dinner. I visited a forest, walked a nature trail, and went to the beach. I had thought my days of enjoying things were over, but I was learning that there are people and places to enjoy all around me.

One day I suddenly realized that it had been over a year since that day I sat in the doctor's office. My heart swelled with gratitude. For me happiness, serenity and fulfillment aren't found or obtained, they are things you achieve by "living."

### Prayer

Lord, help me to express my faith through love. Amen.

### Today's Thought

In this Christmas season, how might you live so as to share laughter, lighten another's burden or return joy to another's heart? Send your message!

## WHAT I HAVE

By Gale Owens

### Romans 15:13

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

I've got to be honest. I don't feel like putting up a tree, decorating my place, or shopping for gifts this year. (Well, except for my granddaughter!) I just don't have the energy. Does that mean I've lost my joy for the Christmas season? Changes in family responsibilities, friends that are sick, and the everyday grind can sometimes drag a girl down! What else can I add to my plate?

This year, I may have to dig a little deeper to connect to Christmas, but it's not like I haven't been here before. And while I may not be overflowing with joy, what I do have is hope.

Hope is in the celebration of the birth of Jesus. I know we've heard the story before, but I find the story means something different every year. This is the year of hope. Hope that can be found in a manger under the stars. Hope that my loved ones will have peace. Hope that we all find joy.

### Prayer

Gracious God, we are thankful for the hope you provide in the moments when our joy is hiding. We get through these times with the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### Today's Thought

If you are struggling this Advent season, try to find a new meaning in the birth of Christ.

## HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE JESUS?

By Glenda Joiner

### 1 Peter 4:10

*“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”*

Jane Goodall, the renowned primatologist/conservationist died October 1, 2025. I admired her strength, courage, and determination to make this world a better place for all God’s creation. I recently learned she had a neurological condition called prosopagnosia, or “face blindness,” which made it difficult for her to recognize human or chimpanzee faces. Goodall learned to recognize individuals by other features like distinctive bone structure, voices, or the way they walked.

As I sat on my porch pondering what that might be like, I saw an Eastern Phoebe on her perch. She has been a yard resident for four years, and I named her Phoebe. I recognize her wherever she is even though I have never seen her face. I know her patterns, how she moves, her coloring, her voice, her rhythm, and her gentleness. If I haven’t seen her in a while, I miss her, and I keep a watch out for her return.

I never knew about “face blindness” until now. I had recently been talking to a friend at the gym discussing memory and how remembering names can be an issue. He said that that wasn’t an issue for him but that he had trouble remembering faces. I found that confusing at the time. Then a few days later I read about Jane’s “face blindness.” Now I understand what he meant. God teaches in extraordinary ways. Goodall’s work shows disability does not limit potential in our service to God and others.

### Prayer

Our Heavenly Father, please cure our “face blindness” so that we may see the face of Jesus in each other. Amen.

### Today’s Thought

The Holy Spirit knows your questions, watch and listen to learn to recognize His answers.

## GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

By Amy Hornby

### **Isaiah 42:11-12**

*"Let them shout from the top of the mountain. Let them give glory unto the Lord."*

My dad died this past March. It still brings tears to my eyes as I type that sentence. He was a humble man who served and loved our country and who loved the Lord. He was an artist who took joy in simple things, and he would often break out in a song while he was talking. He wasn't in great health, but his death was sudden and a surprise to me and my sister. My mom had died three years earlier almost to the day that he passed, and I know in my heart he is so happy to be home with her now in heaven.

When we were going through my dad's things we found an old hymnal from a church we attended when my sister and I were young. A memory came back to me of my mom playing hymns on the piano while I would sit on the couch and sing along. I still remember my feet dangling off the sofa as I would sing my heart out. I also remember singing all those hymns in church on Sunday evenings growing up. A congregation of people lifting our voices to the Lord. Something so simple, but yet profound and beautiful.

After his death, I found myself grabbing that hymnal when I would go out on my porch in the mornings to read my Bible. I have started choosing one or two old hymns and I sing them out loud when I am done reading my devotional. It takes me back to a different time and place when I was young and my parents were alive. I hope God appreciates my intention and effort to include this in my morning worship even though my signing voice is terrible!

This season of Advent is about slowing down and about being mindful and thankful to God for sending his son, the Light of the World! I think of all the beautiful Christmas hymns we sing at church in December and specifically on Christmas Eve. I plan to be signing those beautiful hymns during my morning devotion time this season as well.

Will you join me in lifting your own voice to our Lord and Savior during your private devotional time this Advent season? I hope that like me, it will help to prepare your heart and fill you up so that you can share the love of God with others.

### **Prayer**

Dear Heavenly Father, let me honor you with my voice this advent season. Fill me with your light as I sing of your faithfulness and love for me. Let that light spill over into others around me so that they can see you through me. Amen.

### **Today's Thought**

Go Tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere.  
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

## CONSTANT WONDER

By Sarah Greer

### Genesis 1:1

*"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."*

I listen to podcasts when I am gardening or going on long walks. Recently I listened to a podcast called "Constant Wonder." Each episode is a different topic exploring history, nature, art, science, etc. One man watched a hummingbird hatch and followed the mother feeding and teaching the babies to fledge. Another person spoke of being an amputee and how this changed his outlook on life to embrace the wonder it held for him. Another group had to transport giraffes from an island to another location without tranquilizing, so they had to learn to think like a wild giraffe! The podcast opened my eyes to the possibility of finding something of wonder in my path or being more aware of observing people and nature daily, looking for encounters that move me beyond words.

During the season of Advent each year, I am in Constant Wonder of the events leading up to the birth of Our Savior. Mary is chosen by God and told by a messenger angel of this miraculous role! Joseph is troubled by the news, and he too has a visitation to inform him he will be an earthly father to God's son. Even Elizabeth is blessed by God to be carrying the bearer of the Good News when she gives birth to John the Baptist in her older years. How can this be? A divine calling, the angelic reassurance. A miraculous pregnancy. Constant Wonder at the miracles of God!

### Prayer

Heavenly Father, we revel in your creation. Each day is a new opportunity to find a moment of awe, that moves us to stop and give thanks for this gift of Constant Wonder, especially during Advent. Amen.

### Today's Thought

Let me find the moment of awe in this busy season. Let me not be so busy that I do not stop and give thanks to God that I had this unique experience with a friend, an insect, a sunset, or pet. Journaling these experiences can help preserve and remind me of these personal encounters of joy.

Saturday, December 13, 2025

## A SIMPLE CHRISTMAS BLESSING

By Erin Griffin

### 2 Corinthians 9:8 (NIV)

*“And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”*

In the fall of 2008, during the height of the Great Recession, my husband's company suddenly closed its doors. Like so many others, we found ourselves facing an uncertain future. Our daughter was just two years old, and I was ten weeks pregnant with our son. Though I was fortunate to have a steady job, our finances were tight, and we had to make choices that Christmas.

There were no Christmas cards sent that year, only a few gifts exchanged for our daughter and niece, and many of the festive events that typically filled our calendar were simply not possible. At first, it felt like we were missing out, but as the season unfolded, something beautiful happened. Without the usual distractions, we found ourselves embracing a quieter, simpler Christmas—one focused entirely on the true reason for the season: the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

What began as a season of limitation became a season of blessing that has impacted our Christmas celebrations ever since. That Christmas, we were reminded that joy is not found in the material things or busy activities, but in the incredible gift of God's love, made known to us through His Son.

### Prayer

Lord, we are incredibly grateful for your love and for the gift of your Son. Help us to stay focused on you throughout this Advent season. Amen.

### Today's Thought

Look beyond the activities and materials of Christmas and remember the reason for the season.

## LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS

By Rev. Kathy Brockman

### 1 John 4:7-9

*"God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him."*

Wow, it has been quite a year! As I think about the upcoming holidays, I am reminded of Christmases past, of all the memories of my childhood, and of those days when my children were young. What I am most reminded of is the overwhelming feeling of love. The connection and reconnection with those we love and who love us makes the busyness of the preparation worth it if we take a minute to breathe and remember why we are doing all the things we think we have to do.

I remember one year when both of our boys were in preschool and I was trying so hard to make Christmas perfect for them and for the rest of the extended family. It got to be so overwhelming that I burst into tears as I was washing dishes one evening. Bard, my husband, reminded me that I didn't need to do all the "stuff" for our Christmas to "perfect." He reminded me to take a deep breath and think about the bigger picture. Sometimes it is hard to take that moment to breathe and remember but how important that moment is to the meaning of the season. May we all remember to find time amid all the decorating, cooking, shopping, wrapping and partying to give thanks to God for incredible love God has for us. A love so great that God came to walk among us as a baby who grew into a man who would give his life out of love for us. The poem, "Love Came Down at Christmas" beautifully describes God's love for us:

Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love Divine;  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and Angels gave the sign.  
Worship we the Godhead,  
Love Incarnate, Love Divine,  
Worship we our Jesus,  
But wherewith for sacred sign?  
Love shall be our token,  
Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign.

### Prayer

Loving and Living God, we are so grateful for the love you have for us. A love so great that you would come to live and walk among us as a defenseless baby born of a woman. A love so great that you would ultimately give your life for us. Guide us in the coming days to remember to be grateful knowing we are your beloved children. Thank you for loving us always—even when we maybe forget to be grateful. It is in your beloved name we pray, Amen.

### Today's Thought

May your holiday season be a time of reflection, a time of gratitude, a time of worship, and a time of remembering the love which God has for us.

Monday, December 15, 2025

## JOURNEYS OF LOVE

By Jenna Benston

### Colossians 2: 6-7

*"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."*

100 miles! My nephew, Kyle, completed the Leadville Trail 100 Run in Colorado this August in 22.5 hours. Yes, he ran for one hundred miles in less than 24 hours! In 1983, a coal miner who wanted to keep the city of Leadville on the map started the Leadville Trail Run. The race has grown to almost 800 this year, but only about 50% of the participants finish the race. Running at over 10,000 feet in challenging terrain is not for the faint-hearted!

Almost 100 miles! Nine local women, including myself, walked the last 117 km of the Camino de Santiago in Spain this September in 6 days. With extra wandering for good meals and to find our hotel each day, the 117 km ended up closer to one hundred miles, but yes, we walked LESS than 100 miles taking us MANY days! Still, it was an adventure and a challenge. The Camino de Santiago dates to the 9th century when legend has it that St. James' remains were found in Galicia. Eventually, the Cathedral of Santiago was built to house those remains. *Peregrinos*, or pilgrims, came from all throughout Europe on spiritual journeys ending at the Cathedral. After centuries of popularity and then decline, faithful pilgrims revitalized the Camino in the 1980's. From 209 pilgrims in 1980 to 500,000 in 2024, the Camino continues to gain notoriety.

It was a blessing to join my good friend on her church's trip to the Camino led by Pastor Shannon Dill. One of Shannon's questions to us was whether our pilgrimage was about the journey or the destination. I think we all discovered that, while the destination was the intended reward, the preparation for and the journey itself gave depth to the experience in terms of meeting our mental, physical and spiritual challenges and allowing us to develop meaningful relationships with each other, our community of *peregrinos*, and the world around us. I think of Kyle and how much mental, physical, and spiritual strength he needed to prepare for and complete his race. Thank goodness he was able to surround himself with a supportive team, including his wife and children, his parents, and his friends, who encouraged him throughout his run. I imagine the beauty of the Rockies in mid-summer was a welcome distraction as well. God has given us the gracious destination of everlasting life, but He has also blessed us with our earthly journey where we can experience His LOVE through our own personal growth, through human connection, and through the beauty of our world. It doesn't take a 100-mile run or a hike in Spain to experience God's LOVE, but sometimes doing something challenging can be a good reminder!

### Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for the journey of our earthly life where we experience Your love in so many ways: through personal growth, connections to our fellow humans, and the beauty of our world. Amen.

### Today's Thought

During our life's journey, we thank you for the challenges that bring us even closer to You.

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

# HOPE ARRIVES IN THE SMALLEST PACKAGES

By Terri Marks

## Romans 15:13

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,  
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope"*

Why did our all-powerful god bring our world a tiny baby? Watch what happens as soon as a young couple announces the upcoming arrival of a baby. Suddenly there are blue-filled golf balls being teed up. Pink-filled cupcakes being consumed. Grandparents giggling. Presents everywhere. Dreams for the future, a future filled with hope.

Every time I get to hold a new grandbaby, my heart surges with a love I cannot explain. It's not in knowing the tiny soul, or in any shared memories. Rather, it is in the projection of WHAT IS TO COME.

Mary and Joseph had neither a great "Gender Reveal" nor a Pinterest-inspired nursery. They had a dream. The shepherds had an expectation for greatness. The world had a longing for a savior to ease the heaviness of our earthly souls. Jesus came as a small package, he preached big ideas, and he left us forgiveness, a gift so much larger than we could have ever hoped for!

### **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank you for your tiny package that contained a big hope for a world where you reign.

### **Today's Thought**

What are you hoping for this day? For this season?

## BE STILL

By Megan Cann

### Luke 2:5-7

*"He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn..."*

I moved around a lot when I was young, but we landed in Greensboro, NC, and I spent my middle and high school years learning about and growing in my faith at Christ United Methodist Church.

Annually, during the Christmas concert, the choir would sing "Still, Still, Still." Other songs would change, but this was a requisite. Originally written in German in the late 1800s, this anonymously written song depicts Mary holding her newborn child while angelic choirs praise the Father's love.

As a student stressed about finals, this song brought me clarity and peace.

As a young mom trying to get all the things done on time, this song brought me clarity and peace.

As a bit beyond middle-aged person, this song brings me clarity and peace and a reminder of what is truly important during this busy season.

Please take a moment today to listen to it here (<https://bit.ly/still-still-still>). If you are reading this in the printed format, take a moment and find it online. Give yourself the gift of five minutes to be still, be reverent, and be thankful. Think of the gift that was given to us all with the birth of Jesus.

### Prayer

God, please help us find a way today to show our gratitude to you for sending your son to teach us how to live. Amen.

### Today's Thought

Give yourself a few minutes today to be still, be reverent, and be thankful.

## GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS

By Emilee Stone

### Lamentations 3:22-23

*“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.  
They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”*

Consumed is an accurate word to describe how our family has felt these last few months. In July, my precious stepfather, Rick, passed away unexpectedly, leaving my mother feeling lost, confused, and angry.

In the days leading up to making the difficult decision no one ever wants to have to make, we prayerfully considered the options. As we prayed for a miracle, my mother kept hearing the words “rest assured” and “trust in Me.” She wasn’t ready to let go. She kept a positive attitude, feeling that God would heal him.

In the end, the Lord took Rick home, and our family was rocked. As the days and months pass, Mom is healing. She will tell everyone that her relationship with God is the only way she’s getting by. His faithfulness is constant, she will say.

As we enter the Christmas season, a time when loneliness can set in, we have decided to focus on the true meaning of Advent. Advent means “arrival” or “coming.” As Christians, we are anticipating the arrival of the Christ Child. And for our family, instead of focusing on why God chose to take him from us, we will celebrate Rick’s arrival in Heaven. A far better place than here.

### Prayer

Dear Lord, this Advent season, we pray for those who are hurting, lonely and lost. Help us focus on the anticipation of your arrival and the peace you bring to the world. As the scripture reminds us, your compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. Amen.

### Today’s Thought

God is always with us and his great love for us never fails.

## DO NOT BE ANXIOUS

By Claudette Christensen

### Philippians 4:6-7

*"The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

I have always been glad to live in a part of the country that has all four seasons. As the seasons change, I'm reminded of the beauty of God's creation.

It is now Advent. In the weeks leading up to Advent, we witnessed the leaves on the trees turning colors and then falling to the ground as trees began their winter sleep. Advent is the beginning of a time of cold days and long dark nights, but we know that spring is coming. In the spring, we welcome rebirth, and then summer brings flowers and warmth.

God's love for us brings us through the many challenges that we face throughout the seasons of our lives. We are grateful for the birth of Jesus and we rejoice that we are his.

### Prayer

Dear Lord, we praise your precious name and give thanks for the gift of life that you have given us. We see your presence in every phase of our lives. As the seasons change, we witness the trees shedding their colorful clothing, going to sleep, then winter, a time of cold and sometimes misery. We welcome rebirth in spring, then summer brings a time of flowers and warmth. Hope brings us through the seasons of our lives as we anticipate the promise of new life and peace. Lord, bring us through the many challenges that we face, and there are many, some minor and some much more difficult. Help us to ask for guidance and faith. Amen.

### Today's Thought

Find joy in each day, and be thankful that the profound love of Christ is with you always.

## HONEST TO GOD

By Jason Stone

### 1 Corinthians 13:6-7

*"Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."*

Advent is a season of waiting—for light to break into darkness, for promises to be fulfilled, for God to show Himself in the midst of our uncertainty. We speak often about expectant waiting, but rarely about honest waiting. If I'm being honest to God—and that's the point here—my waiting hasn't always been noble or peaceful. It's been frustrating, slow, and filled with questions I don't say out loud.

For months, maybe years, I've prayed for breakthroughs in my business. I've asked for doors to open, for clarity to come, for growth that I can point to and say, "That's the hand of God." I've tried to be patient. I've tried to be faithful. And I've said all the right words—"I'm waiting on You, Lord." "I know there's a lesson in this." "Show me what I'm supposed to learn."

But deep down, I wasn't being fully honest with Him. I was frustrated. I was disappointed. I was tired of waiting for a miracle when I couldn't even see movement. I said I was patient, but I was growing impatient. I said I wanted to learn, but I'd stopped looking for the lesson. I said I trusted God's timing, but I was silently wondering why He seemed to be ignoring me. And then, one day, it hit me! How could God respond to a prayer that wasn't honest? How could He meet me in the truth if I wasn't willing to bring Him the truth?

It reminds me of something that happened when I was sixteen. I snuck out of the house one night, left all kinds of evidence behind, and of course, my father found out. When he confronted me, he didn't yell. He didn't demand explanations. He simply asked me for the truth. And I didn't give it to him. I lied. And because I wouldn't be honest, he couldn't trust me. His response was simple; he denied me a week of anything I wanted. Looking back, that wasn't punishment as much as it was a reflection of broken trust.

Why would our Heavenly Father be any different? God already knows our doubts, frustrations, and anger. He isn't surprised by them. He isn't offended by them. But He does desire honesty, because real relationship, real love, is built on trust. And trust begins with truth. If we want God to answer our prayers, maybe the first step isn't more patience, or more positivity, maybe it's honesty. Maybe it's kneeling before Him and saying: "Lord, I don't understand why this is taking so long. I'm angry. I'm disappointed. I want to trust You, but it's hard. I know You're good, but I can't feel it right now." That's not faithlessness. That's real faith. Because faith isn't pretending everything's okay, it's bringing everything that isn't okay to the One who can make it right.

This Advent, as we wait for the coming of Christ, the One who came to dwell among us, to feel our pain, and to bear our burdens, let's bring Him the truth. Before we assume He's not listening, let's make sure we've actually spoken what's in our hearts. Because the God who came to save us came not just for our polished prayers, but for our messy ones too. He came for the honest cries of the weary and the wounded. And maybe, just maybe, when we stop pretending and start praying honestly, we'll finally begin to hear His voice again.

### Prayer

Father, thank You for knowing me completely and for seeing my doubts, my frustrations, and my impatience. Teach me to come to You with honesty, not pretense. Remind me that You desire truth in the inward parts, and that love built on trust begins with honesty. As I wait this Advent, meet me in my truth and help me see Yours. In Jesus's name, Amen.

### Today's Thought

Pray honestly and listen for God's voice.

## THE DAY IS ALMOST HERE

By Joe Seegars

### **Romans 13:12**

*"The night is nearly over; the day is almost here."*

"The night is long that never finds the day" is a well-known verse from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

On Christmas Eve, many of us experience the long night of anticipation for what waits for us under the tree on Christmas morning. In *Macbeth*, Malcolm longs for the end of the oppressive "night" of one king's rule and the "day" of a righteous one. The Hindu festival Diwali celebrates the spiritual victory of light over darkness. In Romans, Paul encourages the believers in Rome to put on the "armor of light" because the "day" is almost here.

Regardless of the type of night you are experiencing, waiting can feel endless when the dawn seems far away. Yet Advent reminds us to wait in hope, not despair. It whispers a promise: The Day is coming. The true Light is on His way.

So, wait with anticipation. Scripture assures us that the night does not have the final word. "Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning." (Psalm 30:5) If your night feels long, take heart in Jesus' promise. The morning is nearer than it seems.

### **Prayer**

Come, Lord Jesus. Break into our darkness. Turn our longest nights into dawn. Amen.

### **Today's Thought**

Wait in hope, not despair, because the true Light is on His way.

## JOY IN TRADITIONS

By Wendy Schmitt

### Romans 15:13

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may overflow with hope"*

I find joy in Christmas traditions and especially the Advent season. As I reflect on the many Christmases I have had the privilege of celebrating, I notice that traditions tend to be seasonal themselves.

I grew up in Bethlehem, PA, recognized as "Christmas City USA." My siblings and I attended a Moravian school and we each had the honor of singing a solo verse of "Morning Star," visiting the putz, and making beeswax candles. We all sang in the choir on Christmas Eve at our Episcopal Church, and we went to our Grandparents' house for dinner.

Just before high school, my parents got divorced, and we moved with our mother to Fripp Island, SC. It was so warm in December, no choir anymore, no relatives nearby, there was a different kind of tree, but all my siblings traveled south from their respective colleges. We found a beautiful Episcopal church in Beaufort and sang all our favorite songs together. Walking on the beach became a peaceful Fripp Island Christmas tradition.

Then, my siblings got married and my parents passed away, so the next decade I spent Christmas with friends or family in different places including France, Brazil, England, Beaufort and Nashville. My remaining tradition for the holiday was attending a church service.

The last 20+ years, I have spent Christmas in Atlanta. My husband and I have built our own traditions with our two children. We take a video of the kids coming down the stairs, our son has taken over lights in the yard, we hang a Moravian star on the porch, and we bake cookies from old recipe cards in my mother's handwriting. I always get a little teary-eyed when we light the candles at the end of the service at DUMC on Christmas Eve.

Now that our children are in their twenties, a new season of Christmas traditions is on the horizon. Life has taught me that focusing on the concepts of hope, peace, love and joy during Advent make Christmas special no matter where I spend it.

### Prayer

Lord, help us to remember that the meaning of Christmas is the same wherever we are, and whatever traditions we use to celebrate, you are there too. Amen.

### Today's Thought

Focus on hope, peace, love and joy as you celebrate Christmas with traditions, both old and new.

Tuesday, December 23, 2025

## ABUNDANCE SHARED

By Amanda Masters

### Psalm 65:11-13

*"You crown the year with your bounty,  
and your carts overflow with abundance.  
The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;  
the hills are clothed with gladness.  
The meadows are covered with flocks  
and the valleys are mantled with grain;  
they shout for joy and sing."*

"At this festive season of the year... a time of all others when Want is keenly felt and Abundance rejoices."  
(From *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens)

What's abundance to you? Is it a Christmas tree with a pile of gifts that practically covers up the tree? Is it a Thanksgiving table so loaded with once-a-year amazing food you can hardly move after the meal, even if you don't really care about football or the dog show? Is it an improbably colored plastic pumpkin weighed down with candy to the point you have a chance to find out if "too much chocolate" is a real thing? Is it a whole holiday season bursting with events, chores, decorations, experiences, meals, gatherings, costumes, singing, gifts, cookies, concerts, new outfits, old recipes, tangled strings of lights, family and friends, carols, leftovers, candles, wrapping paper, photos?

Sure, it is! Aren't all those things wonderful? This can really be a festive season of the year.

But abundance is also 285,000 meals packed into a shipping container at this year's FoodStock, which is just one of DUMC's many, many abundant service opportunities. For those who aren't shipping container fans like me, one shipping container is large enough to hold all of the stuff in a three-bedroom house, even the Christmas tree, turkey platter, and plastic pumpkins! That is a lot of meals. Abundance is always best when shared!

### Prayer

Lord, we thank you for your abundant blessings, and for the abundant opportunities we have to share those blessings with others. Amen

### Today's Thought

Let us rejoice in our God-given abundance and remember to rejoice in being able to share that abundance with others.

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

## A SIGN OF NEW HOPE

By Dorothy Waits

### Luke 2:11

*“...to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”*

Babies are wonderful signs of new hope in the world. They come into the world, helpless and needy, innocent and open to love. I think this is one reason we love Christmas time. We get to experience the birth of Christ again like it is happening in the present. A hope of a renewed world filled with love, grace and hope.

When I was about seven years old, I remember going to church on Wednesday nights for family night dinners. They were pot luck dinners. Every family brought food to share with the others. There were seven of us in my family so Moma cooked a full meal to share. It was a fun night, and we played shuffleboard and hide-and-seek outside before eating dinner.

The Wednesday before Christmas someone brought a birthday cake for everyone to share to celebrate the birth of Christ. We used a large round table to hold the cake. Each calendar month had a sign labelled and positioned around the cake. All the children in the congregation lined up around the cake behind the sign of the month of their own birth. Everyone sang Happy Birthday to Jesus and blew out the candles surrounding the cake. Then we shared the birthday cake. It was a special night.

### Prayer

Dear Lord, we know you were generous when you shared your son with us so long ago. Thank you for the greatest gift ever. May we experience the benefit of your gift every day. Amen.

### Today's Thought

This Christmas celebrate Christ's birth with your family. Remember God's gift to us for Christmas. Help his love grow within you.

## THE VERY BEST GIFT OF ALL

By Dr. Phil Schroeder

### Luke 2:10-11

*But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”*

Merry Christmas! I pray you are enjoying the blessings of this day. I love to read the entire Christmas Story aloud on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Take a moment to read the story aloud in Luke 2:1-20. May these words echo in our hearts and mind this day.

Do you remember using 3 x 5 cards for countless things? My father taught me to use them for everything from notetaking to public speaking. So, it makes sense that in 1944, when salesman Ed Goodman was trying to capture the essence of what set Hallmark cards apart, he wrote his notes about the company's core values on a 3 x 5 index card. He considered the core value of Hallmark to be caring, quality, and offering "the best" products.

Goodman jotted down several potential lines, including the one that would become the famous phrase, "When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best." Long before Hallmark, God cared enough for us to send God's very best, his only begotten Son. We welcome this gift of Christmas into our hearts and homes this day and every day!

I also love to sing my father's favorite Christmas Hymn, "Love Came Down at Christmas."

Love came down at Christmas,  
Love, all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas;  
star and angels gave the sign.

### Prayer

God of New Birth, thank you for showing up as an innocent baby, so that we might learn how to follow you as we too grow in wisdom and in grace. Amen.

### Today's Thought

May we sing with joy about the God who comes to us in person, the very best gift of all.



# Christmas WORSHIP

## CHRISTMAS EVE EVE

### *A Modern Christmas*

Tuesday, December 23 | 7:00 p.m. | Fellowship Hall

*Family-friendly modern worship featuring contemporary carols and candle light.*

## CHRISTMAS EVE

### *The First Communion of Christmas*

Wednesday, December 24 | 1:00 p.m. | Sanctuary

*Communion worship in the Sanctuary.*

### **Family Service with Children's Choirs\*+**

Wednesday, December 24 | 3:00 & 5:00 p.m. | Sanctuary

*Family-friendly worship featuring candle lighting and music from DUMC's Children's Choirs.*

### **Candlelight Communion+**

Wednesday, December 24 | 7:00 p.m. | Sanctuary

*A traditional service with Holy Communion, featuring music from DUMC's Youth Choir and Handbell Choir.*

### **A Service of Lessons & Carols+**

Wednesday, December 24 | 9:00 p.m. | Sanctuary

*Traditional worship rich in music and scripture, featuring choral classics and candle lighting.*

### **Candlelight Communion**

Wednesday, December 24 | 11:00 p.m. | Sanctuary

*Traditional worship with Holy Communion and candle lighting to welcome Christmas Day.*

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28

### **One Worship Service**

11:15 a.m. | Sanctuary

**\*Nursery Available | +Candles and prayers in the Chapel with Stephen Ministers**  
**Standard worship times will resume Sunday, January 4, 2026.**

**MORE INFO AND OTHER EVENTS AT**  
**[dunwoodyumc.org/christmas](http://dunwoodyumc.org/christmas)**