



THE MESSENGER

December 2016



Advent/Christmas Opportunities at FUMC



We invite you to come along on this journey toward Christmas, a time of joyous waiting as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus Christ, the new born King, Prince of Peace

Brown Bag Advent Bible Study

“Sent: Delivering the Gift of Hope”

Led by Robert Perales

Wednesdays, Nov. 16 & 30, Dec. 7 & 14 at 12:00 noon

Women’s Advent Study

“The Wonder of Christmas: Once You Believe, Anything is Possible”

Tuesdays, Nov. 22 & 29, Dec. 6 & 13

Motet Choir Christmas Cantata

“Shout the Good News:

Christian Messengers in Scripture and Song”

Sunday, December 11 11:00 a.m.

Children’s Christmas Musical

“Jesus Means Christmas to Me”

Wednesday, December 14

Program begins at 6:00 pm with dinner following.

Please bring a Christmas dessert to share.

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First United Methodist Church of McAllen

4200 N. McColl Road
McAllen, Texas 78504

956-686-3784
Fax 956-664-0204

www.FUMCMcAllen.com

Weekday Office Hours
Monday - Thursday
8:30 - 4:30
Friday 8:30 - Noon

Worship at First Church

Service Information

8:30 Traditional Worship
9:00 Contemporary Worship
11:00 Traditional Worship
9:45 Sunday School

Nursery provided at all services.

Newsletter & Sunday Sermons

Our FUMC newsletter, The Messenger, and our weekly 9 & 11 a.m. sermons, are available on the website, www.fumcmcallen.com.

You can read current or past issues of the *Messenger* and listen to the sermons. You can also follow us on Facebook.

You may also use the website to update your contact information. You will find this link on the home page. Your help in keeping our records current and up-to-date is very much appreciated.

Any changes in your life? Married? Moved? Or Moving?

Please let us know so we can make changes on our mail out data base.

Pastor’s Perspective

Why do you give gifts at Christmas to your friends, family and loved ones? My grandmother bought a gift at Christmas for each of her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. That’s somewhere north of 25 people. We knew what we were getting each year. The only mystery would be the color. In the fall, when the local department store would put their “Gold Toe” socks on sale she would go and buy about two dozen pair. All the boys got a pair of socks and all the girls got hosiery. My grandmother would carefully wrap each present and fill out the “to and from” card.

Once after I became a pastor she asked me “Ricky, do you know why I buy all my family a present each year?” “No”, I replied. She continued, “I love my family, but that’s not the main reason. Each year as I’m wrapping and addressing each present that gives me the time to think about that person and pray that God would bless them and keep them safe in the coming year. Buying and giving presents is a spiritual discipline for me. I keep a list so I can pray for all my family and not forget anyone.”



Senior Pastor,
Ricky Sanderford

(continued on last page)

Children's Ministry



November was packed with blessings as the children shared God's love with others. They donated new socks and made Sock Pals for families welcomed at the Sacred Heart Humanitarian Respite Center. They gathered and wrapped candy to give to people seeking shelter and food at the Salvation Army, and they got to spread good cheer, special music, and encouraging words to their friends at Bridges Assisted Living Center. We are thankful for so much, especially for opportunities to share the joy of Jesus with others.



For information about the Children's Ministry, contact
Lee Ann Clemons,
laclemons@mcfirst.com.



WOW - Word On Wednesday

The WOW teaching team is excited about a special Advent booklet which we hope will help families and their children draw closer to Christ during this season as we prepare for His coming. This booklet was created by Barbara Wilkins with sweet words from the WOW children. Let Lee Ann know if you would like one, and she will be sure you get it.

Following the Thanksgiving holiday, WOW and Choir resume on November 30th. On that day, the first week of Advent, we will focus on what Christmas is really all about, the coming of Christ, and create a special Nativity ornament for the children to hang on their Christmas tree.



On Wednesday, December 7 we will celebrate with a big birthday party for Jesus, cake and favors and all! We are going to thank God for His most precious gift, Jesus, by giving new toys to children who need them. Please send a new toy for a child, 3 years to 5th grade, with your child to WOW on Dec. 7. Send it unwrapped. The children will be wrapping them together during their party. The gifts will be given to the recipients of our church's Christmas Share ministry.

Come explore Bethlehem at
The Sugar Plum Workshop
SAT., DEC. 10TH
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
\$15 registration fee includes lunch
Children 3 yrs. old through 5th grade
Scholarships available upon request

For us, a child is born, a government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his love and peace there will be no end. For he is the one who will reign forever.

All children, 3 years old (by Sept. 1, 2016) through 5th graders, are invited to journey through Bethlehem at the Sugar Plum Workshop. This is a fun day filled with gingerbread mangers, glitter, glue, and MORE as they prepare gifts for family and friends. \$15.00 per child – Lunch is included. Register online on the Children's Ministry page of the church website, fumcmcallen.com, or by contacting Lee Ann Clemons.

Jesus Means
CHRISTMAS
To Me
Children's Musical
Dinner & Christmas Desserts
Wednesday, December 14th

Musical begins at 6:00 pm followed by dinner
Bring a Christmas dessert to share

Created & Arranged by Luke Gambill

All are invited to the children's Christmas program at 6:00 pm on Dec. 14th. We will have no regular WOW that day. The children are to come to church at 4:30 pm. They will have a last rehearsal before the program which will begin at 6:00 pm. The program will be followed by delicious soup and sandwich dinner (\$3 per child, \$5 for teens/adults, \$15 max per family) and desserts. Please bring a Christmas dessert to share following the dinner. Make reservations through the church office.

CHRISTMAS SHARE 2016

Celebrate & Share:
GRACE, TRUTH, & LOVE

PART I:

Friday, DEC. 16th, 8PM - \$25

PART II:

Thursday, DEC. 22nd, 12:30PM-4PM [lunch will be provided]



FUMC McALLEN
YOUTH MINISTRY

The Youth Ministry has been learning and talking about receiving and extending God's grace, the truth of the Good News, and the importance of love. This month we get to experience and put it all into practice at our annual Christmas Share event. Christmas Share is an event where the youth get to celebrate and share what Christmas is all

about by spreading that joy only comes from giving - giving the gift of time, empathy, kindness, and hope. After a long week of school, homework, sports, extra curricular activities, and chores the youth will be spending their Friday night shopping and gift wrapping over 100 gifts for the children of the AVANCE Headstart Program in the city of Alamo. It is a very long night that includes a lot of caffeine, christmas carols, and tons of snacks to stay awake and complete the mission. But the best part about this annual event is Part 2, where the youth get to meet the families receiving the gifts of love. The youth host a party for them including hot chocolate, cookies, and pictures with Santa.

Please join us and celebrate with us at Christmas Share Part 1 or Part 2, or please contribute in the purchase of gifts from the Christmas Love Tree set out in the Foyer, or with your Communion Offering on Sunday, December 4th. We thank you for your prayers and all of your support.



JOIN US FOR LUNCH,
TO RING THE BELL, &
SING CHRISTMAS CAROLS

WED., DEC. 21st

1:05 PM

at Chick-Fil-A

2-6:00 PM

at Hobby Lobby

Jingle
Bells
Jingle
Bells

Advent/Christmas Opportunities (continued from page 1)

New Spirit Worship Service Christmas Musical *A Contemporary Christmas Worship Service*

by Witness Praise Band

Sunday, December 18 9:00 a.m.

Silent Night at the Park

An informal worship service at dusk with a reading of the Christmas story, music, candles, hot chocolate and cookies.

Tuesday, December 20 5:45 pm

Bill Schupp Park, 1300 Zinnia Ave., McAllen

Christmas Eve Worship Services

Saturday, December 24

5 p.m. Family Candlelight Worship Service

7 p.m. Candlelight Worship Service with Holy Communion

11 p.m. Candlelight Worship Service with Holy Communion

*Childcare will be available during the 5 and 7 p.m. services.

Christmas Day Worship Service

Blessing of the Gifts

One Joint Worship Service at 10:00 am
in the Fellowship Center

Bring a Christmas gift you have received this year.

There will be no Sunday School classes held on Christmas morning.

Christmas Day Luncheon

Sunday, December 25, 12:00 noon

Join the Manns and Stolleys for a Christmas Day luncheon in the Social Room. Please bring a salad, vegetable or dessert to share.

Call the church office, 686-3784,
to let us know if you will be attending.





WOMEN'S ADVENT STUDY



- Tuesdays
- 6-7 p.m.
- Childcare will be available
- Books \$10
- Nov. 22nd & 29th, Dec. 6th & 13th

CarePortal

every church doing a little

The Care Portal serves as a wonderful tool to bring the needs of hurting children and families in the surrounding community to the attention of the local Churches. Child Welfare (CW) workers uncover the needs of children, families and youth and through the Care Portal makes local Churches aware, giving them a real-time opportunity to respond. First UMC of McAllen has enrolled in the Hidalgo County Care Portal.

The Care Portal exists to provide a platform for collaboration on behalf of children and families served by the Child Welfare System. When a specific need is identified the CW staff accesses the online Care Portal system and e-mails churches who have enrolled. The church ministry leaders e-mail persons and/or groups in their congregation to let them know of the expressed needs and see if or how we might meet them. Examples of requests could be for clothing, bedding, or for prayers!

Currently, there is no formal communication between CW staff and ministry leaders, leaving many in the community unaware of the opportunity to serve. The Care Portal exists to open a channel of communication allowing willing individuals and groups to serve.

We are excited to be a part of this collaborative effort working with the Child Welfare System in assisting hurting children and their families in our surrounding community. When a need comes to us, we will send out an e-mail to those on our list. At that time, if you or a small group of you feel called to respond, please let us know and we will go from there!

You can find out more about the Care Portal at <https://careportal.org/churches>

We are blessed to be given this opportunity to serve. showing God's love and in God's name!

Pearls of Wellness Wisdom

By Perla Rivera, RN, Wesley Nurse

"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." 3 John 2

The holidays are well underway! My desire for you and your loved ones is that your body, soul, and spirit be merry and bright. Here are some steps provided by the CDC to accomplish health and safety this holiday season:

- **Wash hands often to help prevent the spread of germs.**
- **Manage stress by getting plenty of rest and seeking support.**
- **Bundle up to stay dry and warm.**
- **Fasten seat belts while driving or riding in a motor vehicle.**
- **Get exams and screenings.** Ask your health care provider what exams you need and when to get them. Get insurance from the Health Insurance Marketplace if you are not insured.
- **Get your vaccinations.**
- **Monitor children.** Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, and other objects out of children's reach. Protect them any potential accidents.
- **Practice fire safety.** Don't leave fireplaces, space heaters, food cooking on stoves, or candles unattended.
- **Prepare food safely.** Remember these simple steps: Wash hands and surfaces often, avoid cross-contamination, cook foods to proper temperatures and refrigerate foods promptly.
- **Eat healthy, stay active.** Limit your portion sizes and foods high in fat, salt, and sugar. Also, be active for at least 2½ hours a week and help kids and teens be active for at least 1 hour a day.

For more information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/healthytips/index.html>

Have a Joyous and Blessed Christmas!



Perla Rivera, RN, is a Wesley Nurse with Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc. Methodist Healthcare Ministries' Wesley Nurse program is a faith-based, holistic health and wellness program committed to serving the least served through education, health promotion and collaboration with individual and community in achieving improved wellness through self-empowerment. Learn more at www.mhm.org.

BETTER THAN A
BACKPACK
CARE PACKAGES FOR COLLEGE KIDS

WOVEN WOMEN MINISTRY

TUESDAY
NOV. 29

7:00 PM IN ROOM 202



Order Poinsettias to Support the Youth Ministry



Poinsettias
For Sale
\$15

Order in memory or in honor of loved ones.
The Poinsettias will be placed in the Fellowship Center during the Advent Season. The proceeds will benefit the Youth Ministry.

“First Fruits” Thanksgiving Baskets A Thanksgiving Blessing!

Sunday, 11/20, our church family gathered to sort, pack and deliver Thanksgiving boxes filled with food to neighbors in our surrounding communities. We partnered with Area Agency on Aging who received 12 boxes for elderly persons in need, two missions of El Divino Redentor UMC here in McAllen who received 23, and ARISE ministry where the youth delivered to 30 families in need. Still another 83 were given through the Manna Food Pantry of our church! **A total of 148 individuals and families were blessed with our First Fruits Thanksgiving Baskets!**

What a blessing it is to be part of such a wonderful and generous church family...one that comes together to serve and share the love of Christ! The simple act of sharing our gifts and/or a visit from someone who cares, is a blessing from God!

Thanks to Christine Morley, Pat Mills, Barn White, Carol and Dan Dearth, Tom Hellums, El Divino Redentor UMC, Veronica Dillon and our youth, Walmart, Matthew and Francy Bradley, Ray Chapman, and our custodians (Erasmus, Silvia and Roy)
...And, a VERY SPECIAL THANKS to all of YOU!



TO GOD BE THE GLORY!



Thanksgiving Lunch was served to AVANCE Headstart, Inc. in Alamo at James Bowie Elementary School. Don and Nancy Sharp and Sue Monopoli prepared turkey and all the fixings! There were 180 served! Thank you to Mary Ann Garza, Diane Mork, and Veronica Dillon who helped to serve the delicious meal!



CHURCH FAMILY

*First United Methodist Church
was pleased to welcome
the following into church membership:*



Fred and Lois Kingston
3301 N. K Center St,
Apt #B-107
McAllen, TX 78501



Friday, November 8, First UMC was honored at the McAllen ISD "Partners In Excellence" breakfast for our partnership Escandon Elementary with Operation KidPak and with MISD and our sponsorship of "In His Steps" Shoe Bank and "Serve Our Schools – S.O.S." Pictured here are Rev. Robert Perales, Susan Hellums, Veronica Dillon (not pictured), Whitney Hellums (teacher at Escandon Elementary) and Mr. Carlos Mora (Principal of Escandon). Thank you to our church family for all of the support you give to the children and schools of our community! You are a blessing!

Our Sympathy to...

The family of **Jim Lauderdale** following his death on Wednesday, November 9th
A memorial service was held on Friday, November 11th at FUMC.
Sara and John Tippit's address is 204 Water Lily, McAllen, TX 78504.

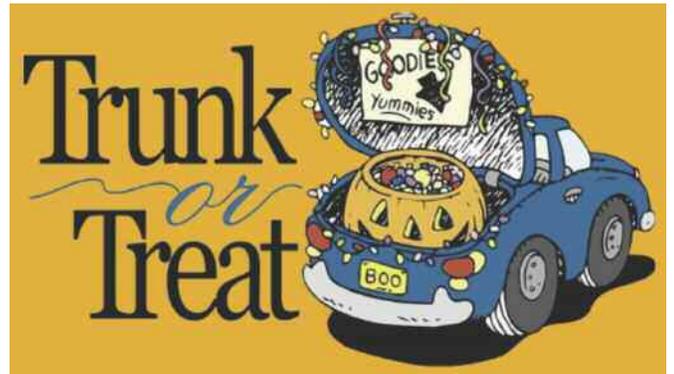
Friends in Faith

Just a note of THANKS during the season of Thanks, for all those who signed up to be a Friend in Faith! This ministry would just not work without you, and I am thankful for all of you!

Please do remember to pray for your youth, and let them know anonymously you are indeed praying for them (use the church address to remain anonymous please). If you filled out a slip to sign up, you do have a specific youth. If you did not receive the letter, please do contact me by email: di.bleibs@yahoo.com and I will get the info to you gladly.

Again have a wonderful holiday season and blessings to you all!

Your faith friend,
Diane Bleibdrey



THANK YOU!

It was a JOY welcoming the community Halloween evening to our annual Trunk or Treat! Thank you to all who... put up tables, cooked, served, led games, donated candy and \$, sold tickets, brought cars and gave out candy, provided music, set up, cleaned up, got dunked, went for additional candy purchase runs, took pictures, gave smiles and warm welcomes and MORE....all in the spirit of joy and love for God's big family! Glory to God for a most wonderful evening!



The Building and Design Committee is pleased to report that we continue to make progress toward our goal of building a new sanctuary. In the last few weeks, new sub-committees have formed and some have already had preliminary meetings. The Audio/Visual team and the Lighting team both met with the architects to discuss very important issues related to the design of our new facilities with respect to sound and lighting. Please continue to pray for our committee and our architects as we near the completion of this phase of the project. If you are interested in serving on a sub-committee, please let Thomas Davidson or any staff member know. With God's help, it is our plan to be breaking ground in early 2017!



Calendar of Events

First United Methodist Church
4200 N. McColl Rd. • McAllen, TX • 956-686-3784

DECEMBER 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
For calendar updates, visit fumcmcallen.com				1 Morning Walkers Exercise Tai Chi Exercise Class	2	3 El Valle District Youth Christmas Party
4 Early Traditional Service New Spirit Worship Holy Grounds Fellowship Late Traditional Service	5 Tai Chi Exercise Class	6 Morning Walkers Exercise Tai Chi Exercise Class Women's First Groups @ First Church, Noon Women's Adbent Study	7 Breakfast & Devotionals Brown Bag Bible Study Brown Bag Advent Study WOW - Word On Wednesday Truth Seekers Witness Band Rehearsal Men's Group Study Motet Choir Rehearsal	8 Morning Walkers Exercise Tai Chi Exercise Class	9	10 Sugar Plum Workshop 2016
11 Early Traditional Service New Spirit Worship Holy Grounds Fellowship Motet Choir Christmas Cantata Confirmation 2017 Parents' Meeting	12 Tai Chi Exercise Class	13 Morning Walkers Exercise Tai Chi Exercise Class Women's First Groups @ First Church, Noon Parkinson Support Group Alzheimer's Support Group Women's Advent Study	14 Breakfast & Devotionals Brown Bag Bible Study Brown Bag Advent Study Truth Seekers Witness Band Rehearsal Children's Christmas Musical Motet Choir Rehearsal	15 Morning Walkers Exercise Tai Chi Exercise Class	16 Christmas Share 2016	17 Christmas Share 2016
18 Witness Christmas Presentation @ 9:00 service Early Traditional Service Holy Grounds Fellowship Late Traditional Service	19 Tai Chi Exercise Class Manna Food Pantry at First UMC McAllen	20 Morning Walkers Exercise Tai Chi Exercise Class Circle of Friends Women's First Groups @ First Church, Noon Silent Night in the Park	21 Prayer Shawl Brown Bag Bible Study Ring the Bell 2016 Witness Band Rehearsal Motet Choir Rehearsal	22 Morning Walkers Exercise Tai Chi Exercise Class	23	24 Christmas Eve Services
25 Traditional Christmas Service	26 Church Office Closed	27 Morning Walkers Exercise Tai Chi Exercise Class Women's First Groups @ First Church, Noon	28 Witness Band Rehearsal Motet Choir Rehearsal	29 Morning Walkers Exercise Tai Chi Exercise Class	30	31

Pastor's Perspective *(continued from page 1)*

This Christmas is one of those years where Christmas Day and New Year's Day falls on a Sunday. Christmas Day is a big family day, but I want to invite you to spend some time with your church family too. We will have a Celebration of the Gifts Service at 10am. This will be the only worship service on December 25. I'm asking for everyone to bring one gift they received and we will spend time singing carols and blessing the Christmas gifts. Dress casually (children in Christmas pajamas!) and bring the family.

I think it's important we reflect on the gifts we have received and the gifts we have given. Not on the physical gifts themselves, but the reason behind the gift – the love and commitment behind the gift and the gift giver. It's important we teach our children the story of God's gift to the world. God gifted the world with his best on Christmas. Let's gather together to recognize that gift, that love, that commitment God made to us.

Grace and peace, Ricky

P.S. The worship schedule on January 1, 2017 will be our normal three services at 8:30, 9 and 11. The services will focus on John Wesley's Covenant Service and Holy Communion.



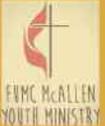
Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets the 4th Wednesday of every month from 10:00 am– 11:00 am in room #209. (during November & December the third Wednesday)

The meetings are informal and a time of fellowship.

Don't worry if you don't knit or crochet, come and learn.

The shawls are given to persons who are ill, have suffered a loss, or are in the midst of crisis. Contact Mary Heimel at 607-0151 or call the church office if you are interested in being part of this wonderful ministry.



CONFIRMATION MENTORS' MEETING

+ WED., JAN. 18TH
++ 5:30 PM
+++ SOCIAL ROOM WEST



We are looking for anyone interested in working with Audio-visual, screens and or sound on Sunday mornings.

If interested contact Ray Chapman
at rchapman@mcfirst.com
or call the church office at 956-686-3784.
Training will be provided.