

FIRST LIGHT

DECEMBER 2023

THIS SUNDAY

This month in worship we prepared get ready--heart, mind, and soul for the celebration of Christmas with our Advent series, "Deck the Halls". Worship in person at 10:50 a.m. in the Sanctuary or at 11:00 a.m. LIVE on KAKE, Facebook Live and on YouTube livestream.

INSIDE

2

New Chairs for Meredith Hall

3

Blue Christmas

4

Children and Youth

5

Missions

6

Class News and Notes

7

Calendar

8

Flower Ministry

FEED THE HUNGRY

Food collected in the A/B entrance goes to United Methodist Open Door.

December food collection:
Macaroni and Cheese

FIRST
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Life. Downtown.

www.firstwichita.org
330 N. Broadway • 316-267-6244
On Broadway between 2nd & 3rd Streets
in downtown Wichita.



It happens like clockwork, somewhere around Nov 1, stores put out Christmas décor and start playing Christmas music. The Hallmark channel begins its marathon of Christmas movies. And social media posts abound saying, "Nooooo! We aren't ready for Christmas yet!" But if not now, when will we be ready? If getting ready for Christmas feels like one long chore, maybe it's time to consider that preparing to celebrate the gift of Jesus might be about more than our tasks and parties. Join us this Advent as we "Deck the Halls" at First Church and get ready--heart, mind, and soul for the celebration of Christmas.



PLEASE PRAY FOR

the hospitalized, our members and attenders with long-term and terminal illness and their care-givers, the homebound, and those who are in long-term care facilities and nursing homes. Please pray for those grieving the loss of a loved one. Please pray for the recovery of individuals experiencing illness, and for our hospital workers. Please pray for the health and well-being of our teachers, school workers and administrators, and for safety of all the children and students in our schools. Pray for our Stephen Ministers and the pastoral care staff who continue to care for the spiritual well-being of individuals. Finally, we thank God for his continued provision and care, and are thankful for the opportunity to worship together in person, and are grateful for the Television Ministry and online option which makes it possible for individuals across Kansas and beyond to worship with us as well.

Articles for the next edition of *First Light* are due Dec. 15, by 9 a.m. Material should be submitted to the appropriate ministry director for approval. Questions can be directed to Erin Davis, 267-6244 ext. 300.

Prayers

Email prayer@firstwichita.org to ask for prayer from the people of First United Methodist Church.

Email pastoralcare@firstwichita.org to ask for a visit, call, or private prayer from the congregational care team.

The Congregational Care Team,
Rev. Amy Lippoldt,
Rev. Rebecca Goltry Mohr,
David Brant

Ready or Not...It's Christmas Time!

By Rev. Amy Lippoldt

I stopped by CVS on November 19 and as I was debating which flavor of cough drops to buy, suddenly, like a giant shock to my ears, I heard over the in-store speaker system, "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer had a very shiny nose..."

"Nooooooo!" I thought. "I'm not ready!"

I may not have been ready but the world around us is gearing up for a great Christmas spectacle of shopping, decorating, eating, and partying. And watching 6 straight weeks of Hallmark Christmas movies. All of that is well and

fun, but none of it really prepares us to celebrate Christmas.

Why? Because Christmas is, above all else, a spiritual experience! Or at least we are invited to make it such. Christmas is the moment when God's love was made real for us, in the person of Jesus Christ. It is the moment when God said, they are lost. I will send them a savior.

Christmas is above all a spiritual experience and I want to help us prepare for that in the weeks ahead. This Advent we will be "Decking the Halls" but in a spiritual

sense! What does it take to be prepared for Christmas? I hope you will be a part of worship in the next few weeks and invite someone new to join you. Bring a friend, a family member, a neighbor, a co-worker, and invite them to get prepared for Christmas too.

Then join us on Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24, for worship at either 11 a.m. or 11 p.m. as we sing carols, light candles, share holy communion, and celebrate the birth of Christ!

Get Comfy in a New Chair in Meredith Hall

You are invited to help the Memorials Committee purchase new chairs for Meredith Hall! After 60 + years of use, we believe the "old blue chairs" have done their duty and the time has come to provide new, more comfortable chairs that are easier to move and store. We trust new chairs will greatly enhance our meals and gatherings that happen in Meredith Hall. We have already been blessed with three memorials designated for new chairs. The families of Bob Novotny, Bob Ream Sr. and Lynn Lunsford have agreed to use memorial funds for this project. That gets us almost half-way to our goal of purchasing 180 new chairs and the racks to hold them. An example of the new chair will be in the AB Entrance starting December 3. Look for the big red bow! When donating by check, notate "CHAIRS" on the 'memo' line or donate through the First Church website 'Give' function and select "Chairs". Any amount is welcome, but a donation of \$50 pays for one chair. Consider giving yourself a Christmas gift of a new chair (or two) for Meredith Hall!



Decking the Halls at First Church



All Church Sunday School

Sunday, December 31 at 9:30 a.m. in Meredith Hall

Join your First Church family for a time of fellowship, and Christmas spirit in Meredith Hall as we have a church-wide Study together. You can expect carols, coffee, light refreshments and plenty of joy!

OUR GIFTS

OCTOBER 2023 OFFERING
\$63,170.95

RECEIVED YEAR-TO-DATE
\$762,882.20

BUDGET YEAR-TO-DATE
\$881,349.69

EXPENSES YEAR-TO-DATE
\$924,336.14

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS
MISSIONS
\$865.00
RECEIVED YEAR-TO-DATE
\$16,459.90

CAPITAL FUNDS
\$115.00
RECEIVED YEAR-TO-DATE
\$2,903.75

ORGAN MAINTENANCE
FUND
\$789.00
RECEIVED YEAR-TO-DATE
\$1,809.00

TELEVISION MINISTRY
\$23,922.00
RECEIVED YEAR-TO-DATE
\$219,617.54
BUDGET YEAR-TO-DATE
\$261,806.66
EXPENSES YEAR-TO-DATE
\$249,405.42

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS
\$88,861.95
RECEIVED YEAR-TO-DATE
\$1,003,672.39

OUR FAMILY

We celebrate the birth of:

Ariadne Celeste Ponce,
born to
Nanci and Reyes Ponce

We grieve the death of

Peggy Ediger



Blue Christmas December 21 | 7:00 p.m. | Chapel

Christmas is a season where joy and revelry are on full display. Unfortunately, not all of us are always feeling the same joy that surrounds us.. Sometimes the pain caused by the loss

of a relationship, a loved one, or unfortunate circumstances can be magnified by the holiday season. Blue Christmas is a worship experience to help put this into focus, to allow

space to acknowledge our grief, and offer hope for healing. This year's Blue Christmas service will be held, Thursday, December 21 at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel.



December United Women in Faith

UWF Expanded Executive Committee
Wednesday, December 13
10:30 a.m. - Room 101B.

United Women in Faith Christmas Party
United Women in Faith Circles will meet together on Wednesday, December 13 at 2 p.m. in the Parlor. It will be a fun and festive time with Dr. Bryan Mock playing the piano for us as we sing Christmas Carols, drink wassail and eat goodies. All women are invited to come!

Year End Giving

As 2023 comes to an end, we wanted to remind you that any money received by the church after December 31, must be reported as 2024 giving for tax purposes. This is true even if the check is dated in 2023. The only exception is for checks that are mailed and bear a 2023 postmark. Please contact the Business Office if you have any questions about year-end contributions. Thank you for your faithful support of First Church!



Help Keep Neighborhood Children Warm this Winter

Many of our neighborhood students at Park and Washington lack heavy clothing, warm coats and gloves. Families in transition are challenged by many financial needs. During January and February, we will collect and deliver kid’s coats for our neighborhood youngsters. Gently used coats are welcome but need to be clean.

Both schools accommodate children from pre-school age through 5th grade, though some older students wear adult sizes. Gloves do not need to be fancy. In fact, the knit ones which often come in packages of 3 or 4 pair, are welcomed. Sweatshirts and pants are always needed also.

To donate to the School Partnership Fund, simply note your intention in the memo line of your check. If you wish to donate items, bring them to the AB entrance at church.



Family Ministry Christmas Eve Party!

Join Miss Ann Baker and Mr. Roy in 103C for Christmas party complete with Christmas bingo, treats, and a Bible story. The Bakers have been long-term dedicated volunteers for the children’s Sunday school class. This year Christmas Eve is on a Sunday! So why not have a fun party with families with children?! If you have children in town this Christmas, they are welcome to join in at 9:30 a.m., it will be a good time for all ages (0-18years).

Fun in the NURSERY



First Church Nursery and Pre-K is a place where children 0-5 years old can learn about God through a Bible story lesson, play with other young Christians and watch worship on TV! We are so grateful for our three wonderful nursery staff, Arena Raymundo, Jakie Raymundo and Amy Remington. Together they have an attitude of Christian love and allow for parents to be present in worship.

Take a moment to say a prayer for our youngest disciples, and for the childcare workers at First Church this week.

Blessed to be a blessing



Thanksgiving Food Collection

Congratulations First Church on a great Thanksgiving food collection. We gave the United Methodist Open Door a total of 2,876 pounds of food! Thank you to those who volunteered during the drive-thru event on November 11 and for those who brought non-perishable items to the church. Thank you to those who gave financial gifts. And a special thank you to those that helped distribute Thanksgiving meals at Open Door! Your generosity helped make the traditional Thanksgiving Meal a possibility for so many families in Wichita.

Thanksgiving Mission Lunch

Thank you to everyone who came out and to all the volunteers that worked to make our Thanksgiving Mission Lunch possible! From the children and families that created our centerpieces, to the volunteers that decorated, cooked and served the delicious meal, you are so appreciated! Your generous donations support children in our neighborhood through our School Partnerships with Park and Washington Elementary!



Holiday Food Collection

This Advent/ Christmas Season First Church will be collecting food for the Open Door. Because there are 42 days between the First Sunday in Advent and Epiphany this year, we are asking that you fill a box with 42 (or more!) items for the Holiday Food Collection. These non-perishable items will help restock the shelves at the Open Door for the new year! The items that are most needed are: mac n' cheese, canned fruits & vegetables and ramen noodles. There will be a donation drive-thru event on Saturday, January 6 from 10-Noon at the D entrance. Contact Pastor Rebecca, JoLynne Campbell or Judith Oswald with any questions.



Class News & Notes

Double Ring

This past month, Double Ring teacher Jack Focht completed his series on the book of Revelation. We then moved to the recent violence in Israel and Gaza. We discussed the history of Israel, recent tensions, the massacre in Israel, and Israel’s subsequent actions in Gaza. We discussed the role that sin plays in causing and continuing wars throughout history.

Numerous members of Double Ring Class participated in making quilts, other wonderful handmade items, and many delicious treats and coffee for First Church’s annual Quilt Sale in October . We are so grateful that these women are so generous with their time and work throughout the entire year to make this event such a success! The funds raised are vital to the Religious Nurture Center and our TV ministry.

Members of our class have been involved in organizing the new Small Talk program, which will provide socks and interaction with our nearby unhoused community. We are also excited about the interfaith work and meetings in the newly created Justice Together program. On November 9, a meeting was held in our sanctuary, which was attended by over 500 people from 30 different religious congregations. It was thrilling to experience our sanctuary \ full of people motivated to make our community a better place. We are excited to see what positive results we can achieve!

Hand in Hand with 50-50

Our Advent Study will be “Prepare the Way for the Lord,” by Adam Hamilton. The study began on Nov. 26 and will continue Dec. 3,10,17, and 24.

More information was given by our class leader, Ken Van Blaricum, on the Dart assembly which held at our church on Nov. 9. Officers were elected and voted to strategize about the issues of homelessness and drug abuse. This will help us prepare for the next assembly in May of 2024 when we will decide on one specific project. A name was chosen for our organization: Wichita Justice Ministry.

Our class Christmas Party will be on Dec. 9 from 1 p.m. to 3ish. We will have soups, croissants, desserts, good conversation and Christmas cheer. It can be a come and go event or stay the whole time. It’s so good to get together! The location is the Sandcrest Clubhouse. This is close to Klaassen’s new patio home. RSVP to Charles Eby or email: Eby007@cox.net Checks or cash can be sent to 1813 N. Cranbrook Cir. 27206—cost \$10 each.

Inspire

Inspire would like to extend an invitation to join us for a weekly scripture reading and discussion in the Parlor. We meet at 9:45 to read and discuss the scripture being used in the weekly sermon. Inspire is geared towards young adults, but all are welcome to join us, and we would love to have you! If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Joseph Schumock, schumockj@gmail.com or Pastor Rebecca for more information!

People’s Open Door

People’s OpenDoor class eagerly awaited our fall get together to see friends we don’t see on Sundays except by Zoom and to spend time together celebrating the life of our friendship with

Lela Heacock. Lela was our president at the time of her passing and has left a definite hole in our lives. We are participated in the November Food Drive for Open Door and the Christmas Connection program for EmberHope. Our study of the book of Luke is very interesting, led by our capable teacher Barbara Simons. Join us for coffee, study, and warm fellowship in 101B.

Pneuma

During November, our class was blessed by Pastor Amy coming to give her perspective on her first four months at First Church. We also welcomed Matt Schrock, director of the Religious Nurture Center, who gave the class an update on this important ministry of the church. We are looking forward to our Advent study as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child.

Pneuma members are participating in providing gifts for the children served by EmberHope. We also helped with providing turkey for the Thanksgiving Mission Lunch and bringing items for the food drive. A number of our class have also been taking part in the DART meetings.

Jean Artz welcomed seventeen Pneuma Ladies to her home in November. The class will be in the homes of Jennifer Ream and the Ebrights as we gather for our annual Progressive Dinner. We always look forward to this time together.

We wish our church family the blessings of the Christmas season.

Seekers

Merry Christmas from the Seekers! We are preparing by using “Almost Christmas, A Wesleyan Experience” for our class study starting November 26. The book may be purchased on Amazon, but you are invited to be part of the discussion with or without the book. David Dinell will be leading the study.

November was a busy time for many members in our class. Several Seekers came on Nov, 4 to help prepare the church building for the holidays. We cleaned pews, flower beds, and steam-cleaned carpets. We also helped with the Food Drive-Through for Open Door. Nancy Dinell led tours to both Open Door facilities with several Seekers attending. The All-Church Thanksgiving meal was prepared under the supervision of Vicki Tanner and Annette Schmidt with many helpers!

Life is full of changes. We had another class member, Ron Lunsford, move to be closer to his children. We wish him the best in his new home in the NW Pacific area. Nancy McKeller moved to Presbyterian Manor and had a huge garage/estate sale with the help of her friends and many Seeker friends.

Our Seeker’s Christmas party was at Prairie Pines Dinner Theater. We enjoyed a dinner and a show, and each other’s company all dressed up!

Each Sunday morning, we are asked to share our “joys and concerns.” For all those spoken and unspoken we hold our Seekers family in our prayers and thoughts. We are so grateful for this gift of community.

Calendar December @ First Church

1 9:00 AM	Friday Poinsettia Delivery Pick-Up - 106B	11 10:30 AM	Monday Prayer Phoneline - Offsite	21 7:00 PM 5:00 PM 8:00 PM	Thursday Blue Christmas - Chapel Family Promise Class - 103B, Parlor, 200C, Nursery Forum Performance "Elf" - Wilke
2	Saturday	12	Tuesday		
3 9:00 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 10:50 AM 12:15 PM 12:30 PM	Sunday Religious Nurture Center Ministry - 100D Adult Sunday School Classes- Church Wide 9:30 AM High School Sunday School - 200D, 201D K-5th Grade & Middle School SS - 106C,311C Nursery and Pre K - 200C, 201C Morning Worship - Sanctuary The Gathering/Small Talk - 103B TV Volunteer Meeting	13 9:00 AM 10:00 AM 10:30 AM 11:00 AM 11:30 AM 5:30 PM 5:30 PM 6:00 PM 7:00 PM	Wednesday Quilters at First (Hand Quilting)-304D Apple Core - Zoom or 302B United Women in Faith Executive meeting - 101B Quilters at First (Machine Work) - 300D Ruth and Elizbeth Circle Gathering - Meredith Hall Chancel Choir Rehearsal - Choir Room Youth Confirmation - 204A RNC Activities - 100D Bell Choir Practice - Bell Choir Room	22 8:00 PM 23 8:00 PM 24 9:00 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 10:50 AM 12:15 PM 11:00 PM	Friday Forum Performance "Elf" - Wilke Saturday Forum Performance "Elf" - Wilke Sunday Religious Nurture Center Ministry - 100D Adult Sunday School Classes- Church Wide High School Sunday School - 200D, 201D K-5th Grade & Middle School SS - 106C,311C Nursery and Pre K - 200C, 201C Morning Worship - Sanctuary The Gathering/Small Talk - 103B Christmas Eve Service - Sanctuary
4 10:30 AM	Monday Prayer Phoneline - Offsite	14 10:00 AM 10:00 AM 8:00 PM	Thursday Bible Discussion Group - 101B Stephen Ministry Training - 103B Forum Performance "Elf" - Wilke		
5 7:00 PM	Tuesday Stephen Leader Meeting - Zoom	15 8:00 PM	Friday Forum Performance "Elf" - Wilke	25 Merry Christmas! - BUILDING CLOSED	
6 9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 4:00 PM 5:30 PM 5:30 PM 6:00 PM 7:00 PM	Wednesday Quilters at First (Hand Quilting)-304D Apple Core - Zoom or 302B Quilters at First (Machine Work) - 300D Hospitality Committee - 302B Chancel Choir Rehearsal - Choir Room Youth Confirmation - 204A RNC Activities - 100D Bell Choir Practice - Bell Choir Room	16 8:00 PM	Saturday Forum Performance "Elf" - Wilke	26 6:30 PM	Tuesday Stephen Ministry Supervision- 302B Library
7 10:00 AM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 8:00 PM	Thursday Stephen Ministry Training - 103B Family Promise - 103B, Parlor, 200C, Nursery Inspire SS Class Christmas Party- Offsite Forum Performance "Elf" - Wilke	17 9:00 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 10:50 AM 12:15 PM 2:00 PM	Sunday Religious Nurture Center Ministry - 100D Adult Sunday School Classes- Church Wide High School Sunday School - 200D, 201D K-5th Grade & Middle School SS - 106C,311C Nursery and Pre K - 200C, 201C Morning Worship - Sanctuary The Gathering/Small Talk - 103B Forum Performance "Elf" - Wilke	27 9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 2:00 PM 28 29 30	Wednesday Quilters at First (Hand Quilting)-304D Apple Core - Zoom or 302B Quilters at First (Machine Work) - 300D Missions Meeting - 308B Thursday Friday Saturday
8 8:00 PM	Friday Forum Performance "Elf" - Wilke	18 10:30 AM	Monday Prayer Phoneline - Offsite	31 9:00 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 10:50 AM 12:15 PM	Sunday Religious Nurture Center Ministry - 100D Adult Sunday School Classes- Church Wide High School Sunday School - 200D, 201D K-5th Grade & Middle School SS - 106C,311C Nursery and Pre K - 200C, 201C Morning Worship - Sanctuary The Gathering/Small Talk - 103B
9 8:00 PM	Saturday Forum Performance "Elf" - Wilke	19	Tuesday		
10 9:00 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 9:30 AM 10:50 AM 12:15 PM 2:00 PM	Sunday Religious Nurture Center Ministry - 100D Adult Sunday School Classes- Church Wide High School Sunday School - 200D, 201D K-5th Grade & Middle School SS - 106C,311C Nursery and Pre K - 200C, 201C Morning Worship - Sanctuary The Gathering/Small Talk - 103B Forum Performance "Elf" - Wilke	20 9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 5:30 PM 5:30 PM 6:00 PM 7:00 PM	Wednesday Quilters at First (Hand Quilting)-304D Apple Core - Zoom or 302B Quilters at First (Machine Work) - 300D Chancel Choir Rehearsal - Choir Room Youth Confirmation - 204A RNC Activities - 100D Bell Choir Practice - Bell Choir Room		

COMING IN WORSHIP

December 3
Second Sunday of Advent
“Deck the Halls” Week 2
Mark 1: 1-8
Rev. Amy Lippoldt

December 10
Third Sunday of Advent
“Deck the Halls” Week 3
John 1: 1-15
Rev. Amy Lippoldt

December 17
Fourth Sunday of Advent
“Deck the Halls” Week 4
Luke 1: 26-38
Rev. Amy Lippoldt

December 24
Fifth Sunday of Advent
“Deck the Halls” Week 5
Luke 2: 1-30
Rev. Amy Lippoldt

FIRST LIGHT

First Light is published monthly by the First United Methodist Church of Wichita, Kansas. It is produced by First Impressions, the Production and Creative Arts Team at First Church, and is provided at no cost to our members and friends.

ARTICLES FOR FIRST LIGHT

We welcome content and story ideas for First Light. They can be submitted to First Impressions at firstlight@firstwichita.org. Please include your name, phone number and e-mail address when submitting material.

Copyright 2023 by the First United Methodist Church, Wichita Kansas. All Rights Reserved.

FIRST
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Life. Downtown.

www.firstwichita.org
330 N. Broadway • 316-267-6244
On Broadway between 2nd & 3rd Streets
in downtown Wichita.

The “Festival of Lessons and Carols” has been a tradition in the Christian faith since 1880 when Anglican bishop, E. W. Benson composed a service of nine lessons with carols in Truro, England. In 1918, it was adapted for the King’s College chapel in Cambridge by Dean Eric Milner-White where it continues to be a yearly holiday tradition. On Sunday, December 17 at 3:00 PM the First United Methodist Church Sanctuary will be filled with the sounds of the season as our Chancel Choir, handbell choir, organist and soloists present a “Service of Lessons and Carols” featuring music and selected scripture readings to prepare us for the birth of the Messiah, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Please mark your calendars and join us for this special worship service.



“Even the biggest Cotton-Headed-Ninny-Muggins will leave the theatre with a warm festive glow!”
Performance days and times: Every Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. Sunday at 2 p.m.

The Forum Theatre will present “Elf” this holiday season, live in our Wilke Family Life Center. Tickets are available at forumtheatre.org or by calling 316-618-0444.

Buddy, a young orphan, mistakenly crawls into Santa’s bag of gifts and is transported to the North Pole. The would-be elf is raised, unaware that he is actually a human until his enormous size and poor toy-making abilities cause him to face the truth. A modern-day holiday classic. Based on the beloved holiday film, this hilarious fish-out-of-water comedy follows Buddy the Elf in his quest to find his true identity.



Flower Ministry of First United Methodist Church Sponsored by Congregational Care Team

The season of Advent is the perfect time of year to reflect upon our many blessings, and the special people who have blessed us. One of the First Church traditions is to deliver poinsettias to our homebound at Christmas time, and we are so thankful for this long-standing ministry. For our homebound members, this ministry is a special way to express how much we care for them, and it also strengthens their connection to First Church.

If you would like to make a donation to our Flower Ministry Fund, please complete the form below and return it with your check to the church

business office by December 15. For your convenience, there are also forms available for completion at the AB desk.



Enclosed is \$ _____ towards the Flower Ministry Fund.

Donor Name _____

Address _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Please complete the form along with your donation and return it to the First United Methodist Church, 330 N. Broadway, Wichita, Kansas 67202. Make your check payable to **FUMC with ‘Flower Ministry Fund’** in the memo.