



DECEMBER 2020 | VOL. 57 | NO. 12

THE FLAME

The First United Methodist Church of LaGrange

A Message from Dr. John...

Advent –It's More Than A Season, It's A Lifestyle!

Advent, from the Latin word meaning 'coming,' is the first of seven seasons of time in the Christian calendar. Unlike living *chronos* time, that is, measurable or quantifiable time, it is living *kairos* time, a season or an opportune time — God's time.

The watchword for Advent is the cry of the Prophet Isaiah:

"'Comfort, yes, comfort My people!' says your God. 'Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.' 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God'" (Isaiah 40:1-3).

This cry is the opening word of the Gospel:

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 'As it is written in the Prophets: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.' 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight'" (Mark 1:1-3).

We are called to **Prepare the Way for the Lord** every day. But how?

My greatest period of spiritual growth came as a college undergraduate. While at Baylor University, and actively involved at The First United Methodist Church of Waco, Texas, I learned the irreplaceable spiritual discipline of having a consistent, daily **Quiet Time** with the Lord. I learned how, every morning, to prepare the way for the Lord to work in and through my life that day, by making uninterrupted time for Him, listening to His voice through the Bible and the Holy Spirit, and offering myself to Him.

This daily practice remains my source of confident trust as I begin each day ready to expect the unexpected knowing that He is always with me.

As we journey through this Advent 2020 together, and approach a new year, I challenge you to commit to a daily Quiet Time with the Lord and see what great calm and confidence He works in your life, especially in these challenging times.

May I suggest using my new favorite experiential devotional guide? **Lectio 365** is a daily devotional resource that helps me encounter God and shapes my life by praying the Bible every day.

Lectio 365 is a smartphone app that guides me by the spoken word and meditative music. Each day's devotional experience runs between 8 and 10 minutes and is presented by world Christians whose accents represent the United Kingdom, the United States, and the continent of Africa.

Lectio 365, inspired by *Lectio Divina*, Latin words meaning 'divine reading,' is a way of meditating on the Bible that has been used by Christians for centuries. Each day I read the same passage twice and discover that God is speaking through it.

Lectio 365 guides me to PRAY. '**P**': PAUSE to be still. '**R**': REJOICE with a Psalm and REFLECT on a Bible passage. '**A**': ASK God to help me and others. And '**Y**': YIELD to His will in my life.

Throughout the year, Lectio 365 journeys through six practices that help us shape life around the **three great loves** at the heart of Christianity. Discover how to love God through **prayer and creativity** (Matthew 22:37), love one another through **justice and hospitality** (Matthew 22:39), and love the world through **learning and mission** (Matthew 28:18–20).

Truly, Lectio 365 is a most impactful devotional practice!

I also recommend two other devotional guides that have richly encouraged my spiritual journey. First, the timeless *"My Utmost for His Highest"* by Oswald Chambers, now available in both classic language and contemporary language in print form and as a smartphone app. And second, *"Jesus Calling"* by Sarah Young, available in print form and as a smartphone app.

Advent — It's More Than a Season, It's a Lifestyle!

Remember how much I love you ...

It's an honor to be your Senior Minister this Advent,

Dr. John Beyers

STUDENT MINISTRY

by Will Locke, Youth Minister | will@lagrangefumc.org

Advent is officially here, and it brought such joy to my heart to be in worship together for the first time since March on Sunday. Student Ministries has several Christmas- and Advent-themed events going on this month. I hope you and your student(s) will join us for all the festivities!



Will Locke

Ugly Christmas Sweaters, Anyone?

We had a fabulous time at our Student Ministries' Ugly-Christmas-Sweater Party at the church on December 2. In addition to ugly Christmas sweaters, we also had a photo booth, hot cocoa station, Christmas games, and goodie bags made by the phenomenal **Tom and Martha Pirkle!**

Christmas Drive-In Movie

Our Christmas festivities continued on Friday, December 4, with a Drive-In Movie showing of "Elf" on in the Vernon Street parking lot. We had a great time watching a Christmas classic together safely while staying warm with hot cocoa!

Tuesday Prayer Breakfast

Our Tuesday Prayer Breakfast is coming up again on December 15. Students can come by the Wesley Hall parking lot any time between 7:30 to 8:00 a.m. to pick up a chicken biscuit and a short devotion on the way to school. It will give students the energy they need to push through the last few weeks of the semester!

Wednesday Night Youth

Our last Wednesday Night Youth of 2020 is on Wednesday, December 9, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in Wesley Hall. We will wrap up our semester-long study of Ephesians and spending time in our small groups together. Though Christmas Break doesn't begin for another week, we want to respect the time and energy the final week of a semester and quarter can take. We will resume Wednesday Night Youth with a Small Group Night on Wednesday, January 6.

'Night of Lights'

We will partner with our Children's Ministry on Sunday, December 13, to provide the "Night of Lights." The event will be similar to the Halloween Scavenger Hunt in that you'll come to the Wesley Hall parking lot and receive a map of houses with stunning Christmas light displays to behold. Afterwards, you'll head to the Vernon Street parking lot and see a live nativity featuring a few of our students ... and some animals too (I hear a camel will make an appearance). I can't wait for this joyous evening of viewing Christmas lights and gazing upon the true light of Christmas together!

Sleep In Heavenly Peace

Also, a huge thank you to everyone who pitched in to make the Bed Build with Sleep in Heavenly Peace a massive success! We not only overfunded our goal by \$3,000; we built 16 beds in three hours. Thank you to everyone who financially supported this outreach opportunity and those who showed up on a gorgeous Sunday morning to help construct the beds. This could not have been made possible without the outstanding volunteers of Sleep in Heavenly Peace and the LaGrange Chapter President, **Greg Watts.** I am absolutely floored by the generosity of our church towards this amazing ministry opportunity to meet a vital need in Troup County.

Spiritual Life Retreat

Lastly, but most certainly not least, we have a huge announcement: SLR IS BACK! You read that right, not autocorrect typos here. SLR is back for Spring 2021! We'll be going the weekend of March 12-14. Camp Glisson has put COVID protocols in place, and I feel confident in recommending this weekend as a safe trip for your student(s). Registration for SLR will open Sunday, January 10. We will have a Parent and Student Meeting in January to discuss the details of SLR and our mission trip next summer. More information about the Parent and Student Meeting will be provided in the coming weeks.

I am excited about all Student Ministries is doing during this Advent season! However, my most profound hope and joy during this season is what Advent anticipates. Advent anticipates the birth of Christ Jesus; His birth is monumental because it declares God is truly with His people! This declaration of God with us in the person of Christ gives me great hope and a firm foundation in a year which has been so vastly different from what I expected it to be. My prayer for you this Advent is you would hold on to the declaration God is truly with you, now and forevermore.

May the peace of Christ dwell in you richly,

Will Locke

'DO SOMETHING' in 2021!

As you prayerfully seek discernment for the coming year, please join our church in discovering what God wants to do through us in the



next phase of our ministry as a church and our discipleship as individual believers. Also, please be sure to complete your 2021 Faith Commitment Card and return it to the Church Office, 401 Broad Street, LaGrange, Georgia 30240. (You also can drop it in our secure mailbox slots at the Trinity Street entrance or the drive-up entrance in front of the Children's Building on Vernon Street.) If you would prefer, you can quickly and easily fill out and submit your commitment card online at:

bit.ly/commitment_card

The Church Office will be closed for the Christmas holidays on Thursday and Friday, December 24-25. We also will be closed on New Year's Day on Friday, January 1.

We wish you all a joyous Christmas season and all the best in the New Year!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

by JEANNE JONES, CHILDREN'S MINISTER | jeanne@lagrangefumc.org

Children's Christmas Party/ Wednesday Night Kids

We met on December 2 and will meet again on December 9 from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. for our Children's Christmas Party. We'll have pizza, ice cream, games, and prizes! Parents, park in the parking lot near the MMC. During the winter months we have permission to meet in Wesley Hall. Please walk your child in to be registered. Masks are required inside the building. We are finishing our Ephesians study this month and will begin a new study in January.

Advent Adventures

Our Children's Ministry is offering a special way for our children and their families to celebrate Advent. We've put together an interactive booklet and supplies that we are giving to you as a gift. This is a fun way for you to share with your child the wonder and excitement of our newborn King. Your gift will be available on Sundays and Wednesdays. Please call or email Jeanne for more information and details.

Night of Lights

Mark your calendar for Sunday, December 13, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. for LaGrange First Methodist's "Night of Lights," a community Christmas event for all ages. Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors. This is a fun and safe way for families to celebrate this joyous season together! Drive to the Children's Building's Broad Street entrance to receive hot cocoa, cookies, and a map. Follow the map to see the beautiful light displays around LaGrange. Your final destination back to the church to see the true light of Christmas — our Living Nativity!

Sleep in Heavenly Peace

Your children are awesome! They were challenged to raise \$70 in one week, and they far exceeded that goal. On top of raising funds for our Sleep in Heavenly Peace Bed Build, many of our kids also participated in the actual build. Great job, everyone!

Children's Church

We are online and will continue to be until children are able to meet separately on Sunday mornings. You can find us on Facebook and in the church online order of worship on our website.

Wednesday Morning Wake-Up

If you aren't watching, check us out! Each Wednesday on Instagram and Facebook we offer a short devotion along with fun facts and our student shout-outs. @lagrangefumckids

Acolytes Needed

We are in great need of acolytes for the 11:00 a.m. service. Students in fourth or fifth grade through 12th grade and older are welcome.

If you'd like to acolyte with your church friends, we can make that happen by working on the scheduling together. Acolytes need to be strong enough to carry the crosses and torches. If you have questions, text or email **Nicole Kostial** at 706-957-7624 or kostialfamily@gmail.com.



ANGEL TREE

MISSION FOCUS THROUGH
THE SALVATION ARMY

Our church is once again making a difference in the life of our community by partnering with The Salvation Army's Angel Tree program to help 80 local children experience Christmas.

During the week, you can stop by the Trinity Street entrance during our office hours of 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Once we buzz you in, you'll find the Angel gift tags for each child along with red bags. Please select a tag (or several!), sign your name, and take a red bag for each child you've chosen.

After shopping for the gifts on your child's wish list, affix the tag to the bag (or place inside it), and label any gifts too large to fit in the bag. Bring your child's gifts to the Broad Street entrance of the Children's Building (press the door buzzer and then leave them just inside the door next to the stairwell) through Wednesday, December 9.

IN PERSON WORSHIP

Would you like for us
to **save you a seat?**

11:00 a.m., Sanctuary

Register online each week at:
bit.ly/inperson_fumc
or call the Church Office.

NOTE: All protocols, as well as the date of our next service, are subject to change based on current conditions. Please stay alert to email notifications as well as Facebook updates.

Christmas Decorations 2020



In Memoriam

Florence & Charlie Patterson
and Howard Patterson
by Their Family

Sherry Patterson
by Her Family

Frances & James Thornton
and Frank Thornton
by Their Family

Edna & Dewitt Kelly and Sue Ann Tyson
by Dodie Patterson & Family

Phyllis Martin Enright
by Sharon & Alan Jones

Mr. & Mrs. John A. Jones
by Sharon & Alan Jones

Gary L. Stephens
by Jane E. Stephens

Pearle Dunson Sims
by Elizabeth Sims

Jimmy Sims
by Elizabeth Sims

Marguerite Smallwood
by Ann and Perry Wilder

Marjorie Wilder
by Ann and Perry Wilder

Edd, Nona, and Eddie Cooper
by Sheryl Cooper

Dick Willey
by Jane Willey

Mr. & Mrs. H. C. Hartzell
by Jane Willey

Mr. & Mrs. R. C. Willey, Sr.
by Jane Willey

John Robertson and
Mr. & Mrs. J. E. Eidson
by Virginia Eidson Robertson

Huvis Ashley & Martha Tanner
Peacock, parents of Paige Schine
by Murray Schine

Jacob Morris & Otis Kirkland
Schine, parents of Murray Schine
by Murray Schine

Paige Peacock Schine
by Murray Schine

Our Parents, Mr. & Mrs. L. T. Hite, Jr.
and Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Mines
by Betty and Joey Mines

Lamar Wadsworth
by Jennie Wadsworth

Guinn & Reaunette Vaughn
by Their Family

Rev. Sidney Tate
by Enid and The Tate Family

John Alise
by Carolyn Alise

Mr. & Mrs. R. H. Mills
by Carlene and Dusty Mills

Mr. & Mrs. Carl Benefield
by Carlene and Dusty Mills

Julia Hope Johnson
by Carlene & Dusty Mills

George Deane Allen
by Anne Allen

Dr. Eugene P. "Rusty" Willimon
by His Family

Lewis Goode, Jr.
by Cecelia Goode

Richard Linch
by Carole and Kelly Linch

John and Suzanne Schuessler
by Mark and Suzie Highland

Lydia Helms
by Mark and Suzie Highland

Don Rainey
by Esther, Andy, Will,
Matt, and Elizabeth Rainey

Our Parents
by Sally and Ray Holmes

Robert Yates
by Yates and Lauren Colgrove Parker

Nancy Jane Parker
by Yates and Lauren Colgrove Parker

In Honor

Lori, Tim, London & Reagan Taylor
by Jane E. Stephens

Renee & G R Peters
by Oleeta Aspinwall

The Clergy & Staff
of LaGrange FUMC
by Murray Schine

Our Church Family
by Murray Schine

Anna & Sophie Myers
by Geggie

Betty Ragan
by Peggy Lukken

Builders Class
by Short and Jack Brown

My Family
by Carolyn Alise

Janice & Dick Ingram
by Anne Allen

Dr. & Mrs. John Jackson
by Libba Trawick

Dr. & Mrs. John Morgan Jackson
by Libba Trawick

Betty McManaway
by Oleeta Aspinwall

Dr. John, Our Special Minister Son
by Jan and Jim Beyers

Our Children and Grandchildren
by Allen and Marilyn Smith

Elizabeth Hayes
by Mark and Suzie Highland

Michael, Audrey, John, and Charlotte Hayes
by Mark and Suzie Highland

Matthew and Kendall Hayes
by Mark and Suzie Highland

Quin Rainey
by Esther, Andy, Will,
Matt, and Elizabeth Rainey

Our Children and Grandchildren
by Sally and Ray Holmes

Our Grandchildren
by Molly and Bobby Carmichael

Sylvia Davis
by Oleeta Aspinwall



THE FLAME

USPS (079-260) IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

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Mrs. Jeanne Jones	ext. 209	Children's Minister
Mr. Darian Krimm	ext. 202	Minister of Music
Mr. Will Locke	ext. 215	Youth Minister
Ms. Dodie Patterson	ext. 204	Member Engagement Coordinator
Mr. Andy Rainey	ext. 201	Executive Minister
Mrs. Natalie Shelton	ext. 203	Director of Communications
The Rev. Ben Wills	ext. 206	Senior Associate Minister

To reach all other staff members and/or volunteers, please call the Church Office. Our business hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

We now have a secure mail slot to the right of the Trinity Street office-door entrance. In addition, you also may drop off correspondence in our locked black mailbox under the portico on Vernon Street outside the Children's Building.

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Memorial Gifts

ORREN GILBERT

Cecelia Goode
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Laura & Blair Harlin
Carolyn Alise
Carlene & Dusty Mills
Susannah Circle of UMW
Donna & Richard Ennis
Lea & J. M. Rawlinson
Duane & Barbara Whitney
Jay & Donna Fager
Sybil Davis

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Virginia Robertson
Ellis Smith & E Smith
Anne Allen
Marilyn & Allen Smith
Shirra & Hoyt Rogers
Donna & Richard Ennis
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Thomas Teaver
Ginger N. Booton
& Celia N. Johnson
Callaway Foundation, Inc.
UMW of First Methodist
Carole & Kelly Linch
Lynn & Thurston Garrard
Marcine & Tommy Gresham
Pat & Jim Nappier
James Earl Weldon
Betty McManaway
Bobbie & Lonnie Ritchie
Carlene & Dusty Mills
Michael Boling
Belle, Emmett, Colton,
& Layton Davis
Tee Borders

JIM & LEILA FULFORD

JoAnn Walker
Laura & Blair Harlin
Donna & Richard Ennis

MARTHA ANN WALLACE

Anne Allen

CAMILLA MYHAND

Anne Allen

LAGRANGE FIRST METHODIST'S

Night of Lights

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13
6:00 - 8:00 PM

A FREE DRIVE-THRU CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!

Drive through via the Wesley Hall entrance for free hot cocoa and cookies, along with a map featuring the Christmas lights of LaGrange. Then, return to the Vernon Street parking lot to experience our Living Nativity (with animals, including a camel)!

