

# MINISTRY@DHUMC



"I have often thought, it happens very well that Christmas should fall out in the Middle of Winter."

- Joseph Addison



## MINISTRY@DHUMC

*A monthly newsletter for the membership of Drexel Hill United Methodist Church.*

December 2019

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Everyone!

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Everyone!

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Visit often for updates on church activities.

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## PASTOR'S MESSAGE



Pastor  
Russell

### *The Silent Gift*

*"O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;  
above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight."*

Phillips Brooks, ca. 1868

Few moments engage the imagination of my spirit like those spent under the open sky very early in the morning before daybreak.

The world is so very silent then.

December's morning silences seem especially deep. Many a winter's day before daybreak is clear, still, silent, and star-filled, as if all eternity has paused for a moment to let me understand.

There seems an everlasting quality about that time of day, a fine time, perhaps the best, to gather one's thoughts before meeting the demands of the day. These moments before daybreak are particularly appropriate to the Advent season because these cold, silent December mornings simply require of us a feeling of wonder and expectation.

What a contrast such quiet moments make with all the daytime busyness of the commercial scene before Christmas.

The season avalanches upon us before we Yuletide celebrants, always becoming yet one year older, comprehend the pace of the calendar.

There is so very much to do. We all participate in a conspiracy against what should be a calm season of reflective preparation for the coming celebration of the birth of the Christ Child.

We rush to crowded shops where we make purchases to the sound of canned Christmas music that takes it in turns to be feverish ditties or hyper sentimental schmaltz. We hurry to do everything, and before we are aware, Christmas has come and gone, leaving us with a tired feeling of regret that we have missed the meaning of the holiday.

Nevertheless, dear friends, there is good news: December doesn't have to be this way.

Christmas can come in all its meaning, even in the midst of our mad activity, even in the middle of frustration and turmoil, if we listen, or just occasionally, if we are very blessed, despite our misspent attention.

In the silence of the clear, cold days of December, God will speak to us and tell us the meaning of what we are about to celebrate. (COLUMN CONTINUES)

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## *The Silent Gift*

(COLUMN CONTINUES) Instead of thundering at us above the season's pandemonium, God speaks to us as in times past in a "still, small voice."

In the silence, God gets our attention, especially in the early hours of the day when it is quiet.

Some such thoughts must have occurred to Phillips Brooks when he wrote these words:

*"How silently, how silently the wondrous So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven."*

God will speak to us anew in the silence of our hearts this blessed season imparting to us the message we yearn to hear.

Listen! The gift will come. It will come to you.

A blessed Christmas to you  
And those you love  
And those they love  
Until all the world is blessed.

### **WORSHIP NOTES**

#### **The Star: A Journey to Christmas**

An Advent Bible Study



Tuesdays in Advent, Nov. 26, Dec. 3, Dec. 10, Dec. 17, 9:30 a.m., Pastor's Study

This Advent season, you and your friends, family and neighbors are invited to an unforgettable Christmas celebration.

- ✦ Nov. 26 HOPE
- ✦ Dec. 3 LOVE
- ✦ Dec. 10 JOY
- ✦ Dec. 17 PEACE

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## The Star: A Journey to Christmas

More than 2,000 years ago, a star burst through the darkness and signaled a long-awaited but still unexpected birth of a Savior. Today, another star shines, piercing the darkness of our lives with hope, love, joy and peace.

This Advent season you are invited to follow the star on a journey to Christmas. It is not just about the destination but about a journey of discovery that leads us toward hope, love, joy and peace as we draw near to Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

Advent is a season that is officially observed in many churches. The four weeks before Christmas are set aside as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of Jesus's birth. The term advent is a version of the Latin word that means "coming." But Advent is not just an extension of Christmas, it is a season that links the past, present and future.

Advent offers us the opportunity to share in the ancient longing for the coming of the Messiah, to celebrate his birth, and to be alert for His second coming.

So, no matter what the department stores try to tell you, Christmas has not yet arrived. There is value as well as excitement in patient and expectant waiting. May this be a season of wonder for you.

Just as the star led the Magi to Jesus so many years ago, may the Holy Spirit lead you as you embark on a journey of hope, love, joy and peace.





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## A Coat Drive, a Birthday and Some Sandwiches

Capturing a few moments in photos.

The church held its annual coat and blanket drive in October and the items were presented at the front of the church during our Oct. 20 worship service. This year, the congregation generously donated 13 coats and 38 throws and blankets. The items were delivered to the Life Center in Upper Darby on Oct. 29 to help out the homeless population there.

October also saw our second annual Covered Dish Dinner Oct. 25 in the Rainbow Room with a special emphasis on the Halloween season. Alex Mullin once again provided trivia games, keeping with the theme, including a challenging game in which guests had to identify different sounds. The Friday night Great Pumpkin event of food, game and camaraderie was a wonderful introduction to Halloween and a reminder of how enjoyable it is to occasionally spend time with each other outside of worship service.



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Also in October, we held our second Congregational Meeting Oct. 6 after services in which we discussed the future of Drexel Hill United Methodist Church. Congregants had an opportunity to share information and ask questions about the church's finances and possible solutions to resolve the church's financial difficulties. Information from those meetings was gathered by the Ad Council which is now exploring the feasibility of various solutions suggested. A final recommendation is expected in January.

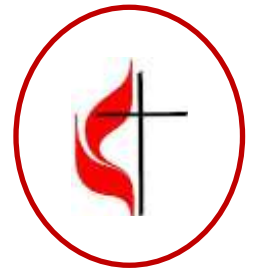


It was a busy Nov. 3 worship service, which observed All Saints Sunday. Below, congregants take Communion. At left, our Pastor of Visitation, Nancy Hawes, is presented with a cake in celebration of her 75th birthday.

The service honored in memoriam George Burns, Lois Smith, George Griffith, Walt Vinnacombe, Betty Crum, Robert Frylinger and Shirley Musial.

**Photos by Alex Mullin**





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We rounded out the Nov. 3 service with a sandwich-making team that gathered after services to make sandwiches (turkey and cheese) for Open Church on the Parkway that day. Open Church presents food and worship opportunities to the homeless population that gathers at Aviator Park in Philadelphia.



Photos by Alex Mullin



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## STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY



On Nov. 10, we continued to demonstrate ourselves as a generous congregation as we filled out pledge cards, making a commitment to support the church in 2020.

We give to support our church for worship and to support our programs. The church's work includes outreach to our community and beyond with the understanding that we love and care for each other.

The day also reminds us that all we have at DHUMC comes from God and our monetary commitment is a way to honor Him and give back.

As we plan the church's future path, the solid financial commitment from our congregation reminds us that we are all working together for the greater good so that the church's ministry may continue for generations to come.

Thank you to everyone who made a pledge in 2020.

*--Jack Neigh, Dave O'Connell—Stewardship Committee*

## SMILE! You're in Our Church Directory

The church is in the process of putting together a new directory for the fall that will feature our members, staff and returning visitors. This new, updated and compact directory will be offered in print and online, which can be updated as our members and regular attendees change over time.

One photo session has already taken place on Nov. 11 but so many have requested to be included that we added a second photo session on Monday, Dec. 16, 2 to 9 p.m. in McBurney Chapel. Contact **Jane Todd** for appointments at 610-306-7501.

- Participation helps create a complete and accurate a directory as possible for our congregation.
- At the photo session you will be offered a free 8x10 print and a free directory, with the option to purchase additional photographs of your choice.



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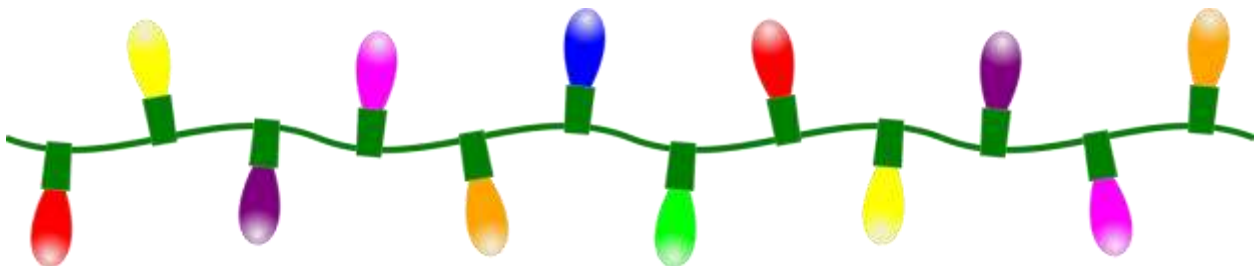


The church once again organized and packed Thanksgiving baskets for delivery to families in need in the Upper Darby School District.



DHUMC File Photo 2017

Items were purchased or donated through contributions from our congregation and the Boy Scouts. Volunteers sorted the items in the Rainbow Room on Friday, Nov. 22. On Sunday, Nov. 24, volunteers packed the baskets in the Rainbow Room following church services. This annual event is organized by the church's Outreach Committee.



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## See you in December

### Advent Activities



### It's Christingle time again

On Sunday, Dec. 1, the entire congregation has again been invited to make a Christingle and sing a Christingle song. Bishop Johannes de Watteville started this Moravian tradition in 1747 Germany as he looked for a simple way to explain the happiness that had come to people through Jesus.

Originally represented as just red ruff wrapped around a candle, the symbolic item has evolved to become an orange (representing the world); a red ribbon (representing the love and blood of Christ); candies and dried fruit (representing all of God's creation) and a lit candle (representing Jesus' light in the world, bringing hope to people in darkness.)

DHUMC File Photos Christingle December 2018



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## Angel Project

The annual Angel Project begins Sunday, Dec. 1, the First Sunday of Advent. Everyone is asked to select an Angel from the Christmas tree in the Narthex. On it is the gender and age of a child in the Upper Darby School District.

Take a shoe box and fill it with gifts and/or gift certificates for the child. You will be asked to return the filled shoebox Sunday, Dec. 15. It will be gift wrapped and presented to children in need from the Upper Darby School District. This is an ongoing project of the Outreach Committee.



## *Hanging of the Greens* DHUMC File Photo

The traditional “Hanging of the Greens” is scheduled this year for Sunday, Dec. 8, and will take place during the worship service. The Nativity will be set up, the Christmas tree decorated and garland and other greenery hung throughout the Sanctuary marking the beginning of the Christmas season.



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## Christmas Caroling

DHUMC file photo

Last year, some of our church members visited people's homes and senior care facilities to offer some Christmas carols and personal Christmas greetings. The event was so successful that we will be doing another round of caroling on Sunday, Dec. 15. Volunteer singers are always welcome. More details will follow about this holiday event.





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## Poinsettia sale

Check the church bulletin for an order form if you would like to place a poinsettia on the altar for Christmas on Sunday, Dec. 22. The plants are \$10-each and orders will be taken Dec. 1 to Dec. 15.

You can place a check and the order form in the offering plate, or drop it off on the church secretary's desk in the church office.

You can also drop off or mail an envelope containing a \$10 check and information that includes your name, phone number, email, the number of poinsettia's ordered, who the plant is in honor of, or in memory of, and who is presenting the plant.

Indicate if you want to pick up the plant Dec. 22 or Christmas Eve, or if you want the poinsettia sent to a shut-in.

Mail it to Drexel Hill United Methodist Church  
C/O Rasheedah Abdullah  
600 Burmont Road,  
Drexel Hill, PA 19026



## Lessons and Carols/Christmas Eve/Christmas breakfast

This year, the worship service will include a selection of Lessons and Carols at the Dec. 22 worship service, featuring special music and selected passages of the Christmas story. Christmas Eve will be celebrated with a family-friendly service Dec. 24, beginning 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary. On Sunday, Dec. 29, a Christmas breakfast will be offered in the Narthex of the church prior to services from 9 to 10 a.m.

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## Music lovers, find your home in the choir

Our choir under direction of music director Dan Matarazzo, is always happy to welcome new members. Our group of singers practice every Thursday evening at 7:30 in the Sanctuary. Music brings much beauty and inspiration in our devotion to God. See Pastor Russell or Dan Matarazzo to find out more, or contact the church office at [office@umc.org](mailto:office@umc.org).



## Bacon, Toast, and the Heavenly Host!

If you've got an appetite for the Word of God and a good breakfast, come on out to the Perkins Restaurant, 706 N. Lansdowne Avenue in Drexel Hill (just a short hop from the high school) the first Thursday of each month. Led by Pastor Russell, the devotional breakfast begins at 9 a.m. The next breakfast takes place Thursday, Dec. 5.



### *The prayer chain.*

If you know of someone in need of prayer, or if you are in need yourself, don't hesitate to contact the church office at 610-259-2104, or email [office@dhum.org](mailto:office@dhum.org) and your request will be given to our volunteer prayer chain.



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## Coffee and conversation



Be part of the team that's making our coffee and social time after church such a big hit. We're looking for volunteers who can offer a few minutes now and then before and after church to help set up/clean up coffee and snacks.

Will train! No experience necessary! Benefits include: First dibs at fresh coffee and doughnuts, access to coffee klatch gossip and a chance to create a friendly, welcoming place for your fellow church-goers.

You'll find a sign-up sheet in the Narthex and you can talk to Jane Todd (or email her at [janedt@verizon.net](mailto:janedt@verizon.net)) for more details.

We continue to welcome everyone to join us in the Narthex after service for a few minutes of coffee drinking, socializing and worship service critiquing.

## Get Involved!

Worship is a blessing. Our Drexel Hill United Methodist Church is so much more! Are you looking for a way to serve through our congregation? Here is a list you might consider:

### Activity:

Delivering altar flowers  
Helping with communion  
Ushering  
Singing in the choir  
Prayer Chain  
Hand out lunch on the Parkway  
Addressing Gun Violence  
Community Outreach  
Helping in the Sunday school  
Maintenance of the building  
Gardening  
Media/digital/newsletter  
Prepare after-church refreshments  
Counters for the Collection Plates  
And anything else you can think of.

### Contact:

Cindy Carper  
Sally Mullin  
Charles Webb  
Dan Matarazzo  
Jane Leggieri  
Russell Atkinson  
Dave O'Connell  
Helen Campbell  
Helen Campbell  
Alex Mullin  
Barb O'Connell  
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Jane Todd  
Diane Whitehead  
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[texmomoc@verizon.net](mailto:texmomoc@verizon.net)  
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[whitehead.diane@gmail.com](mailto:whitehead.diane@gmail.com)  
[pastor@dhumc.org](mailto:pastor@dhumc.org)

If you don't use email but would still like to reach out to serve in an activity, just contact Pastor Atkinson at 610.259.2104 and he will get you in touch with a leader in your interest area.

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*The following thank you note comes from your newsletter editor, Dave Bjorkgren:*

**Dear Church Family,**

Just a quick note to thank you all for your support and prayers as I've struggled through a difficult summer and fall. I'm hoping in the months ahead that things will continue to improve as I adjust to some changes in my life. The fact that you cared enough to offer prayers and surround me with love and support made the journey through these changes so much easier. I do apologize for the disruption of the newsletter in October and November but I will work to try and get us all back on a schedule. Thank you all and thanks for reading! David Bjorkgren

## IN THE COMMUNITY

### FOOD BANK



#### **December food bank requests**

*Will They Know Its Christmas?*

For your December food bank contribution why not consider including a monetary gift? With your cash donation the food bank could provide special Christmas treats for a family in need and a special Christmas joy. Simply make your check out to "DHUMC," with the memo: "Food Bank." Canned and boxed nonperishable foods are still very much needed. For the Yuletide please bring: **A canned ham (for Christmas dinner), cranberry sauce, stuffing mix, plain white rice (no "Minute Rice" please), cake mix (for the Christmas season) and canned fruit.**

Our Drexel Hill UMC food collection is gathered in the narthex. You may bring a contribution at any time. *"For I was hungry and you gave me to eat."*





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## BLAST FROM THE PAST

### Christmas through the years

(Reprinted and updated from the 2018 December newsletter, from a timeline listed in "A History of the Drexel Hill United Methodist Church")

1. In 1890, the King's Daughters were formed and for the next 14 years gave a Christmas Entertainment at the Southern Home for Destitute Children and a basket of fruit and candy to each child as well as a toy to each child in the Methodist Episcopal Hospital.
2. In 1902, the Wesley Sons arranged exercises for Christmas and Easter.
3. In 1927, the choir presented a program of Christmas carols by French, English and German composers of the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries.
4. In 1943, the Bohn class sent the Readers Digest to servicemen for Christmas and bought War Bonds with the money in the treasury.
4. In 1954, several Christmas baskets were distributed.
5. In 1955, 350 attended the covered dish supper of the Adult Fellowship at Christmas.
6. In 1959, the Christmas offering of \$4,422 permitted the mortgage to be reduced to \$30,000. In 1954, the mortgage stood at \$95,800.
7. On Dec. 13, 1970, the choir presented the Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah accompanied by some members of the Philadelphia Orchestra.
8. In 1975, the Christmas offering of \$6,877 was 150 percent above previous years.
9. In 1984, The Cherub Choir began rehearsals in October for the Christmas Eve program.
10. In 1984, a very successful Christmas musical and dinner were held on Dec. 9.



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(The following article comes from the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference website)



*Kevin Dunn presents an overview of U.S. United Methodist membership data to the General Council on Finance and Administration board during its Nov. 15 meeting in Nashville, Tenn. He is the agency's director of data services. Among the bright spots he pointed to was the church's growth in Hispanic and multiracial members. Photo by Kathleen Barry, UM News.*

## U.S. No Longer Holds Majority Status in Methodist Membership

**By Heather Hahn**

The U.S.'s majority status in The United Methodist Church is coming to an end — and may be there already.

That's according to projections from the denomination's General Council on Finance and Administration — based on the continuing decline in U.S. membership as much as growth in Africa.

According to the agency's forecast, total membership in the central conferences — church regions in Africa, the Philippines and Europe — will exceed that of the U.S. jurisdictions in 2020. Read more by clicking [here](#).

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## AROUND THE WORLD

(The following article comes from the People of the United Methodist Church website)



Bishop Harald Rückert of Germany announces the support of bishops in Africa, Europe and the Philippines for the proposed U.S. regional conference. He made the announcement toward the end of the Nov. 3-6 Council of Bishops meeting in Lake Junaluska, N.C. Photo by Sam Hodges,

## Bishops' Group Backs US Regional Conference

**By Heather Hahn**

The effort to create a new United Methodist structure for U.S. decision-making received a boost from bishops in Africa, Europe and the Philippines.

"The central conference bishops will promote and solidly support the U.S. regional conference proposal," Bishop Harald Rückert of Germany announced to applause near the end of the fall Council of Bishops meeting.

Rückert was reading a statement he said the Central Conference College of Bishops unanimously passed during its meeting Nov. 1 after hearing a presentation on the proposal.

The Connectional Table, a multinational body that acts as a sort of church council for the denomination, drafted the proposal. The group's goal is to have a body to take up matters that solely affect the U.S. church and ease the burden on the multinational General Conference. U.S. proposals often dominate The United Methodist Church's top lawmaking body assembly.

While the Connectional Table doesn't see the proposal as addressing the denomination's homosexuality debate, other United Methodists see it as a way of allowing the church in the U.S. to make changes to allow same-sex marriage and ordination of "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy. To read more, click [here](#).