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"Always winter and never Christmas;
think of that!"

"How awful!" said Lucy.

"The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" (1950)

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

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Everyone!

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PASTOR'S MESSAGE



Pastor
Russell

Loving Christmas

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. " Luke 2:7

Have you ever become more aware of loneliness, violence, and other sicknesses around Christmas time? I doubt Christmas creates these things, but the joyfulness generally abroad in the season must certainly heighten our consciousness of community pain and sorrow.

Back in the 90s, Melvin Maddux conjectured in the Christian Science Monitor about "Noël Neurosis" He described shoppers, loaded down with bags of gifts, stepping over homeless people as they are hearing carols, ". . . let every heart prepare him room."

Søren Kirkegaard offers the Christmas message in a fairy tale. He would have been quite aware that he

was recounting the Nativity story:

"Once upon a time a king fell in love with a beautiful maiden" it's an ancient theme about how love overcomes barriers of class and race and nationality. "But, for all its beauty, the king didn't see the matter easily resolved. Racking his mind and heart was the question: On 'How to declare his love?' Unable to answer it, he summoned to his palace all the wise people of his kingdom and put the question to them. As one, they responded: 'Sire, nothing could be easier. Your majesty has but to appear in all your glory before the humble abode of the maid and instantly she will fall at your feet and be yours.'

It was precisely that thought which troubled the king. In return for his love, he wanted her love, not fear that would lead her into submission. He wanted her glorification, not his. What a dilemma, when to declare your love means the end of your beloved, when not to declare your love means the end of love. Night after night the king paced the floor of his palace pondering until at last, he saw love's true truth:

Freedom for the beloved demands equality with the beloved. So, late one night, long after his courtiers and counsellors had returned to their chambers, the king stole out of a side door of the palace and appeared

(COLUMN CONTINUES BELOW)

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Loving Christmas

(COLUMN CONTINUES)

*before the humble abode of
the maiden dressed in the
garb of a servant.*

Our God comes to us
as one of us.

In medieval Europe
there was a legend that
the Christ child roamed
the streets of towns and
hamlets in distressing
disguises.

The faithful put
candles in their windows
on Christmas Eve to
welcome in anyone who
shivered in the streets;

the lame, the blind, the
halt.

They could not possibly
turn anyone away for
fear of turning away
Christ himself.

I wonder in this
frantic, beautiful season
how Christ will come
among us.



I wonder how we
might find the time to
take the risk of inviting
him in.

God chose to enter the
world not in command of
a mighty army, but in a
vulnerable child.

God comes to us in
love, always in love.

And where love is, God
is there, too. The Christ
comes to us as one of us,
for when we love one
another, we love Christ
too.

**Happy Christmas.
Russell J. Atkinso**

WORSHIP NOTES

Advent Meditation



Thursdays in Advent, Dec. 6, 13, 20, 6-6:30pm

This December, escape the dizzying
deluge of Christmas preparations for
half-an-hours' concentrated meditation
where all is calm, all is bright.

Bring a friend with you to experience
the centering calm of guided meditation.
Hear the Advent scriptures through the
ancient practice of *Lectio Divina*, listen

to plainsong, and pray using some
classic prayers.

Each Thursday during Advent our
meditation will begin in the sanctuary
Chancel and will finish within a half hour.

For further information contact
Pastor Atkinson, 610-675-7187 or
pastor@dhum.com.

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To Bethlehem and To Kingdom Come

“Almighty God, give us grace, that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.” The First English Prayer Book, 1549

Though Christmas can be a troubling time to some, mostly, to use a familiar seasonal phrase, it reminds us of comfort and joy.

Using many familiar characters and episodes Christmas tells the story of Jesus’ birth. All the well-known Christmas scenes point us in the same beautiful direction. We may surprise ourselves with how much of the scripture account we can recall word for word. It is not at all by chance that we all seem to have vivid memories of Christmas; singing the carols, worshipping in the candlelight, and hearing the mystical passages.

Advent is much more of a challenge and (perhaps I can begin an argument) is more important for us disciples. Firstly, Advent covers a wider scope. Advent celebrates Christ coming again at the close of the age, and it celebrates those events when the

Christ continually comes; post-resurrection experiences, where two or three are gathered, and in the Eucharist.

Advent illuminates for us that the time between incarnation and final coming is one of continual imminence. Christ is coming now; not only in the past or in the future!

This set of ideas can be illustrated for us by considering the squabble generations of scripture translators have over the Aramaic word *maranatha* (the word shows up in 1 Corinthians 16:22). To see the word’s double meaning depends on the division of the syllables: *marana tha* means “come, our Lord,” and *maran atha* means “our Lord has come.” Examining the original texts does not conclusively show which way to split the word – much to the frustration of the literalists, the entertainment of the

playful, and the benefit of the faith. The term was significant in early Christian spirituality and has meaning for many Christians today.

In **“O Come Emmanuel: Scripture Verses for Advent Worship,”** William Marshall states, “It is only because Christ is present with us now that we long and pray for his fuller manifestation.” Here Marshall has made a *maranatha* statement. Both are crucial to understanding the expectation and celebration of the Advent--Christmas-Epiphany Seasons.

Again this year, the people of Drexel Hill United Methodist Church will celebrate the season with parties, presents, and meals. We will join with friends, believers and otherwise, in warmth and hospitality. We will also behold *Maranatha*: Come, our Lord. Our Lord has come.

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December Sunday services

Sunday, Dec. 2, First Sunday of Advent (*Communion*)

Luke 21:25-36

Sermon: "Time" *Pastor Atkinson*

211 O, Come, O Come, Emmanuel

206 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

718 Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending



Sunday, Dec. 9, Second Sunday of Advent

Luke 3:1-6

Sermon: "The Grace Agenda" *Pastor Atkinson*

203 Hail to the Lords' Anointed

2089 Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice

626 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent

Sunday, Dec. 16, Third Sunday of Advent

Luke 3:7-18

Sermon: "Everything" *Pastor Atkinson*

196 Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

184 Of the Father's Love Begotten

202 People, Look East

Sunday, Dec. 23, Fourth Sunday of Advent

Luke 1:39-55

Sermon: "Advent Arias and Divine Divas" *Pastor Atkinson*

198 My Soul Gives Glory to My God

2099 Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine

197 Ye Who Claim the Faith of Jesus

Sunday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve

Sunday, Dec. 30, Christmastide

Luke 2:41-52

Sermon: "A Little Christmas Story" *Pastor Atkinson*

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In praise of Thanksgiving

A Thanksgiving service of reflection took place Tuesday, Nov. 20, in the chancel of the church Sanctuary. Visitors from several local churches were also in attendance. There was music, a sermon and Bible readings, including a responsive reading, "Prayer of Thanksgiving" originally written in the Coptic language and discovered back in 1945 among 52 documents in Nag Hammadi, Egypt. The service also offered time for individuals to give their own reflections. Below are a few photos from the service.



Photos by Alex Mullin



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Yuletide Breakfast 30 December

You are most cordially invited to join Barbara Felton and Russell Atkinson for a leisurely breakfast on the Sunday between Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Serving will begin at 9 am. Gather with friends from the congregation in the Narthex.



A Generous Community

From the Stewardship Committee:

We wanted to express our thanks to the congregation for their participation in the 2019 pledge drive. Our church has so much to offer as it spreads the joyful message and mission of God. Your thoughtful contributions make it possible for us to "stay in business," supporting the programs and services that have become so much a part of our lives and which can make a crucial difference in the lives of others. Thank you for your support as the church continues to face new challenges and new goals. With your financial help, your active participation, and with your prayers we can reach even higher heights and fulfill our greatest potential.

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.



Sunday School

The Sunday School children are about to begin the Winter part of their curriculum. We want to thank Rev. Nancy Hawes for her kind donation of Advent calendars and books to all the students. We are very grateful for these wonderful resources.

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Poinsettia sale

Now is the time to order a beautiful poinsettia for the altar. Orders may be placed until Dec. 9. The plants will decorate the altar on Dec. 23 and Christmas Eve. Contact Sally Mullin (610-328-7381) or Cindy Carper (610-543-4557) or the church office (610-259-2104) with questions or orders. Cost is \$10 each. Order forms are in the weekly bulletin.

Also be advised that the price of altar flowers (not poinsettias) will be \$30 as of January, 2019.



Tuesday Morning Faith Bible Study

Our congregation continues its Bible Study/Faith Formation Class led by Pastor Russell. The class meets on Tuesdays, 9:30 to 11 a.m., in the Pastor's Study and is open to everyone. The session is broken down as follows:

9:30 - 9:45 a.m. - How goes it with your spirit?

9:45 - 10:45 a.m. - Study

10:45 - 11 a.m.-Prayer and Praise

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. 6.

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Blue Christmas

So often we focus on the light, but we don't focus on the light in the darkness.

A Longest Night Service, also known as Blue Christmas, will be held in our sanctuary on Dec. 21 at 7:30 p.m. in the church sanctuary. The service is open to the public.

The service is traditionally held on or near the winter solstice and coincides with the day when there is the shortest amount of sunlight.

"It is really dark, and it's really a hard time for a lot of people. It's the end of the year, the ending of things, and there's a lot of grief in that," says Rev. Nancy Haigh.

"So often we focus on the light, but we don't focus on the light in the darkness," she said. "This is the only service I know of where churches acknowledge just how dark the dark is."

Blue Christmas services include an emphasis on candles.

People in the congregation invited to come forward and light a candle in memory of someone or to mark an event in their lives.

Some will say words out loud, others in silent prayer. Candles are also sometimes lit as prayers or Scripture readings are recited. These services have a more quiet, somber feel than a traditional Christmas worship service. Scripture, music and meditations or sermons focus on the comfort God offers during dark times.

For many people, the approaching Christmas holiday does not bring with it the joy and happiness that is advertised on television or in greeting cards. They may be facing a holiday after the death of a loved one or after a divorce. Perhaps they have been unable to have a child, or have suffered through an emotional trauma. Or perhaps they feel pressured and overwhelmed by holiday preparations.



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 and your request will be given to our volunteer prayer chain.

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Coffee and conversation



Volunteers continue to be needed for our after-service coffee gathering in the Narthex. Volunteers would help set up coffee, hot water and provide a simple snack 15 to 20 minutes before the service. All supplies and directions for making the coffee are kept handy in a closet in the Narthex.

Someone will be available to assist if it is your first time to help out.

The sign-up sheet is in the Narthex.

Thank you from the Membership Committee

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
Community lunch (project RSC)
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
And anything else you can think of.

Contact:

Cindy Carper
Sally Mullin
Charles Webb
Dan Matarazzo
Cindy Carper
Jane Leggieri
Russell Atkinson
Dave O'Connell
Helen Campbell
Helen Campbell
Alex Mullin
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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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New videos to check out!

Here's what's new on the Drexel Hill United Methodist Church YouTube channel for December.

- ★ [Packing the Thanksgiving baskets Nov. 18](#)
- ★ [Confirmation Class video by Pastor Russell on the Gospel of John.](#)

Click on the titles above to view the videos. You can also visit our YouTube channel to check out all of our videos. Go to www.YouTube.com and search for Drexel Hill United Methodist Church.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Christmas through the years

(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 12th, 13th and 14th Centuries.
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.

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IN THE COMMUNITY



Grateful families receive Thanksgiving baskets

The Outreach Committee is very thankful to everyone who contributed to our Thanksgiving Baskets. We put together 20 baskets with fresh produce, including potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, carrots, celery, apples and oranges.

Also included were cans of peas, corn and mixed vegetables, cranberry sauce, gravy and stuffing mix, pancake syrup and mix, and elbow macaroni. Everyone received a \$20 gift card to Acme and a package of nice napkins

This is a long standing tradition of our church. The recipients are very grateful. It is all possible because of the generosity of our members. Below are a few photos from the basket packing. Click [HERE](#) to see a video of the volunteers at work.



Photos by David Bjorkgren



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Be An Angel



Our Christmas Project begins on December 2, 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. Return the shoebox unwrapped on Sunday, Dec. 16. We will have a wrapping party after church that day. Click [here](#) to see a video of last year's shoebox packing and wrapping.

Any contribution you can make is greatly appreciated by the Outreach Committee, the families and the social workers from the school district.





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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."*

OPEN CHURCH ON THE PARKWAY

Once a month, on a Sunday afternoon, sandwiches and snacks are collected for those in Philadelphia having a tough time and delivered to them at Aviator Park across from the Franklin Institute. The Open Church on the Parkway visit includes a small worship service. Volunteers are welcome to join Pastor Russell for the next visit, scheduled for Dec. 23. If you'd like to make difference in the lives of others, please contact Pastor Atkinson.



RSC LUNCHEON



There is NO RSC luncheon scheduled for December. The next luncheon will be the fourth Saturday of January, 2019, on, Jan. 26, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the Rainbow Room (Fellowship Hall). The Project Reach Serve Care program provides a free hot catered lunch and friendly fellowship, to anyone in the community



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



The Rev. Kristine Marshall of Bethel United Methodist Church in Anderson, Ind., spent her time at the Breaking Barriers Global AIDS Conference creating three canvases to represent the process of breaking free from the stigma of living with HIV/AIDS and living your fullest life. Photo by *Crystal Caviness, United Methodist Communications.*

Message at HIV/AIDS event: 'Say the words'

By Crystal Caviness

Say the words "AIDS" and "HIV" out loud. Put the words — in all caps — in the church bulletin's prayer concerns section and don't shy away from the conversation.

These suggestions were among those offered — and repeated — during the recent Global AIDS Conference on how the church can help end stigma for people living with HIV and AIDS.

"Breaking Barriers," held Oct. 25-27 at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, gathered 140 people representing a spectrum of the population, including people of faith, health care professionals and advocates, community leaders, volunteers and people living with HIV, to discuss strategies for saving lives and increasing awareness. [SEE MORE](#)

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AROUND THE WORLD

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

Members of migrant caravan seek better lives



This is a view of the border fence in El Faro Park in Tijuana, Mexico, after the arrival of the first members of the migrant caravan. Photo courtesy of Rubén Velarde de la Congregación Nuevo Pacto de Playas de Tijuana.

By Kathy L. Gilbert

While some have labeled Central American migrants headed to the U.S. as criminals or opportunists, many people of faith see them as children of God escaping desperate situations in their home countries. One of those people is the Rev. Gavin Rogers, an associate pastor at Travis Park United Methodist Church in San Antonio, Texas. He joined the migrant caravan on Nov. 9 for a few days because he wanted to hear the migrants' stories and understand why they are risking so much to leave their home countries. [SEE MORE](#)

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DECEMBER 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 Be An Angel starts 1 st Advent	3	4 Bible Study 9:30-11	5	6 Breakfast devotional 9	7	8 Hanging of the Greens RR Society 9-3
9 2 nd Advent	10	11 Girl Scouts 4:30-6 Bible Study 9:30-11	12 Cub Scouts 7 p.m.	13 Choir 7:30	14	15
16 Be An Angel gifts due 3 rd Advent	17 Angel gifts pick up	18 Bible Study 9:30-11 a.m. Trustees 7 p.m.	19 Cub Scout Holiday Party 7 p.m.	20	21 Longest Night service	22 Poinsettias delivered NO RSC Lunch
23 4 th Advent	24 Christmas Eve service 7 p.m.	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 Cub Scout 7 p.m.	27	28	29
30 Open Church Narthex Breakfast 9	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2 Cub Scout 7 p.m.	3 Breakfast devotional 9	4	5

