

THE WORD

UNIVERSITY BAPTIST CHURCH

November 30, 2021 Vol. 72, No. 91

Advent Reflection

With Thanksgiving behind us, we are into Advent. This is the time when we prepare our hearts for Christmas and remember Jesus' birth. We do this not because we do not know the details of the Christmas story, but we celebrate Christmas each year because Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith. His birth marks God incarnate entering the world. We can then look at Jesus' life as a model for our lives, and his death and resurrection (Lent, Holy Week and Easter on our Christian calendar) fills in the rest of the story.

There are many concurrent celebrations around this time of year. There are Hanukkah, Kwanza, Chinese New Year, and more. There is the secularization of Christmas (Santa, Frosty, etc.). Offices have Holiday parties. Friends gather for Friends-giving and Christmas parties. In a crass attempt at inclusiveness, one store has been marketing to celebrate the ALL-idays (instead of holidays). Families travel to see loved ones. Students (and teachers!) get a break from school. With all this celebration, it is easy to get swept up in it.

Recently I heard a news story about how to avoid *overspending* during the holiday season. As I listened, I pictured the poor, teenaged, single pregnant girl Mary. Over the centuries, she has been venerated as a saint. Hardly a Dutch or Renaissance master worth his salt can be found who has not painted a gorgeous depiction of Mary-the-Mother-of-Our-Lord. We have come a long way since those humble days in Bethlehem. It almost seems as though we have lost sight of the humble beginnings.

Advent and Christmas are about Jesus as the foundation of our faith. Mary's story can serve to remind us that our faith is not glitz and glitter. It is not about overspending and bountiful indulgence. Thinking about Mary reminds me about the simplicity of our faith. It is about following Christ, making him first in our lives. It is about listening to the Holy Spirit.

SERVICE OF HOLY WORSHIP

December 5, 2021
11:00 AM

Jubilate Lessons and Carols

Sermon

"Road Work Ahead"
Rev. Will Brown

Scripture:

Luke 3:1-16

Deacons: Jim Moore, Herman Eaker

Ushers: Shirley Clark, Bob Gough

CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 1

9:00 UBC Work Team
10:00 PBJ Bible Study (Zoom)
12:00 Treats on the Front Steps
7:00 Sanctuary Choir Practice

SUNDAY, Dec. 5

8:30 Church Council
9:45 Sunday Bible Study
(Zoom and Fellowship Hall)
11:00 Morning Worship
5:00 Jubilate Caroling with Youth

MONDAY, December 6

ON WATCH

8:30 Morning Prayer ([UBC Facebook Page](#))

10:30 Bible Reading Group ([Zoom](#))

Advent is the season of preparation and expectation. We prepare to travel or we prepare for guests. We prepare for our friends and loved ones with gifts. We look forward to seeing people and hearing beautiful Christmas music. In our joy and celebration, we need to avoid glossing over Mary and her story. In the beauty and magic of the season, we remember the one who came humbly into this world.

In the Gospels, we find Jesus participating in celebrations. In fact, in John, Jesus' first public miracle was at the wedding at Cana, when he turned the water into wine. To celebrate, to gather with family and friends, or to give gifts is not wrong. Jesus modeled this behavior. So, as we celebrate, we can be mindful of the reason.

We can give a great treasure by truly caring about another person. We can spread God's love by listening to someone. We can model Jesus' life by loving others just as Christ does. "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them" (1 John 4.16).

Peace,
Matt

Bible Study concluding this week

Our Combined Adult Bible Study in Fellowship Hall and Zoom will have its final session on the book of Acts this Sunday, December 5, before taking a break during the holiday season. Stay tuned for details about when and how we will resume in the new year.

UBC Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving Day, a group of UBCers gathered together in the Fellowship Hall and shared a meal prepared by our wonderful Chair of Deacons, Debra Bryant. This was a beautiful way that our deacons lived out the tagline on our new round UBC logo: "an inclusive family of faith," gathering around the table for fellowship together during this season.

If you have not had a chance to grab a sticker with our new logo yet, they are available in the sanctuary narthex as well as in Val's office!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

Join us in wishing some of our church family a Happy Birthday this week!

December 6: Mary Jo Licero

December 7: Judy Gough

December 10: BJ Blincoc

December 11: Jack Wilkerson

Prayer Concerns

Sympathies extended to John Via and family upon the death of Patricia (Pat) Downer Via on November 25.





A Quiet Place to Study - Almost Time for Finals!

It is almost finals time again! UBC has continued to welcome in students to study and do laundry in our building all throughout the fall semester. We will be distributing advertisements with other student groups and preparing to welcome even more studious UVA friends into the building throughout finals, December 8-16.

This year we will bring back the homemade cookies and treats that were a highlight of past years. Anyone interested in providing a homemade treat can [sign up at this link](#). Note that you are being asked to spread out donations across the full week of finals rather than drop everything off on the first day. Anyone interested in spending time at the church to greet students as they arrive can sign up for a shift [at this link](#).

We also need many individually wrapped snacks and a good supply of beverages to keep these students fed and watered through the week! Please consider picking up one of the items listed here to drop off at the church. You can also take a look at the current stock of items in the collegiate ministry room to see what we keep around all the time!

Cans of Dr Pepper or Coke

Bottled Water

Cans of sparkling water (our students love mango, lime, and blueberry; but will not touch cherry flavors!)

Individual packets of apple sauce

Bags of chips (especially Doritos, Cheetos, and Sour Cream & Onion Lays)

Granola bars

Variety packs of mini candy bars

Microwave macaroni & cheese cups

Fruit snacks

Nature's Bakery Fig bars (blueberry and raspberry; or Costco variety pack)

Mini Muffins chocolate chip muffins

Individual packages of Oreos and Nutter Butters

2022 Pledge Cards

The pledge cards for 2022 will be mailed out in the upcoming weeks. We're looking into 2022 at University Baptist Church, and your contributions are critical to supporting God's mission here and abroad. We are deeply grateful for the ways you participate in the life of the church!

Church-wide Christmas Card! (Google form link corrected!)

Instead of the traditional "Christmas Post Office" at UBC, this year we are again sending out a church-wide Christmas Card to every family in the church. Like last year, this card can contain a personalized greeting from you! For instance, "Wishing you a Christmas season filled with joy and laughter! -Love, Will, Erin, Luke, Seth, and Caleb. :)"

Because our usual Post Office is a great fundraiser for missions, we don't want that to slip away. We ask everyone submitting a greeting to also make a donation to missions, as large or small as you are able-- consider donating the postage you save. To list your greeting in this giant card, please do two things. 1) Fill out [this form](#) or contact the church office to give us the wording for your greeting by **December 10**. 2) Donate to our Offering for Global Missions, either by mailing a check to the church office or by [giving online](#).

Of course, you are still welcome to mail cards to your church family if you'd like, using the USPS. But if you'd rather save some postage, this Church-wide Christmas Card gives you an easy way to reach everyone. Merry Christmas!

Christmas Missions at UBC

Christmas Dinner in a Bag – The Covid Version

Twelve or so years ago our WMU (Woman's Missionary Union) realized that all of our missions efforts, other than the Global Missions Offering, were over and done by Thanksgiving, leaving a bit of a void. We called Love INC to see what their needs were, and were told that while lots of organizations did Thanksgiving dinners, no one gave Christmas dinners. We agreed on a grocery list and this fun, personal, hands-on ministry was born. In 2019 we delivered 46 bags of non-perishables and a \$15 gift card (from the WMU budget) with each bag intended to be used for the main dish.



December 2020, after several conversations with Susan Shellito, Love INC's Clearinghouse Coordinator, we learned that due to COVID 19 and Love INC's limited office hours, it would be more prudent to provide grocery store gift cards for \$30. Last Christmas we were able to give Christmas dinner to 90 families.

For this Christmas Mrs. Shellito has again asked that we provide gift cards rather than groceries. We realize that everyone is asking for money at this time of year, so we're asking that you donate only what you would have normally spent on bags of groceries.

Due date is Sunday, December 12. Please make checks and online donations payable to UBC and earmark "Dinner in a Bag."

CANCELED: UBC Missions Post Office due to COVID concerns. We will again, as we did last year, be organizing a church-wide Christmas card to be mailed to all our members. See the Christmas Card article above.

CBF Global Missions Offering

During the month of December, we will be collecting donations for the CBF (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship) Global Missions Offering. You will be hearing much more about that in the weeks to come.

Children's Christmas Shop

We are excited to bring back the Children's Christmas Shop this year, in a slightly modified format. As in years past, children will have the opportunity to "shop" for gifts for their family members, with all proceeds going toward missions. This year, the Christmas Shop will be held on Sunday morning, December 12, at 9:30 in the Fellowship Hall.

Donations needed: if you have small "treasures" that you would like to contribute, please drop them off in the church office or nursery. We want to make sure the kids have plenty of fun options to choose from. :)

Shop at AmazonSmile

and Amazon will make a donation to:

University Baptist Church

Get started

amazon smile

If you are looking for alternative ways to support UBC, you can do so by shopping at smile.amazon.com during the holiday shopping season. You can make a difference every time you shop through Amazon! Simply press the link provided, and AmazonSmile will prompt you to set up UBC as your preferred charity. Shopping at smile.amazon.com will then always send a portion of your total to University Baptist Church.

Young Adult Friendsgiving Dinner

Young Adults are invited to a Friendsgiving Dinner at Rev. Fisk's home on Friday, December 10, at 6:30 PM. This night will be an opportunity for people in that post-college, mid-20s to early-30s stage of life to gather together and connect with other UBC folx, hopefully the first of many of these gatherings!

Food is being provided by the Annie Armstrong Circle, so all you have to bring is yourself and your preferred beverage. Email vfisk@universitybaptist.org for more details.

Sunday Mornings

Sunday Bible Study

On Sunday mornings, 9:45-10:30, our ministers are leading a discussion series on the book of Acts, considering lessons that our church can draw from the early church's story. You can join us in person in the Fellowship Hall, or via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85381408096?pwd=MzdkVG9JZ2x0M2JFK01KNINjSWtqUT09>

Meeting ID: 853 8140 8096

Passcode: 954000

The Open Minds Class is also meeting on Zoom at this time.

Worship

Our Sunday morning worship service will begin at 11:00 am. We encourage everyone in the congregation to join us in whatever way you feel safe and comfortable at this time, whether in person or virtually. As always, you can listen by radio on WINA (1070 AM and 98.9 FM), or you can join us online for our live broadcast. To view the live video broadcast, visit our [Facebook page](#) or click [this link](#) to watch on YouTube.

Masks & Social Distancing

University Baptist Church continues to follow the recommendations of the CDC as they are updated. At this time, that means that all individuals, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, should wear a mask for all in-person gatherings in the church building. As we monitor this next wave of COVID cases related to the Delta variant, we will make announcements as our policies are adjusted.

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Connect with us

