



CENTREVILLE
United Methodist Church

The Spirit of
Christmas

2020

Advent and Christmas

Planning Guide

*The Spirit
of*



Christmas

As I am preparing for this year's Advent and Christmas seasons, I am finding myself drawn to the part of the birth narrative when we read "and she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7 NRSV) You and I have seen many a Christmas pageant when an innkeeper is telling Mary and Joseph that there was no room. We are often led to believe that he was stern in his refusal, perhaps pointing them in another direction. When we think of inns, hotels and motels, we think of individual rooms where families stay for the night. During this time an inn most likely had two rooms for guests, one for women and one for men. Instead of seeing a refusal by a rude innkeeper, we would do well to see that he was gracious in seeing that Mary was about to give birth, so he made accommodations for them to be together and offered his cave (or stable) where she could give birth to Jesus.

This year I can't help but see a contrast from the first Christmas to this one. In the story, there was no room. This year, we have plenty of room in the sanctuary. They were allowed to be together, albeit in a cave. In many ways social distancing has kept us apart. We may see that their not being allowed into the inn and being directed to be among the animals was ungracious and yet it was an act of grace. Our not gathering together as we are accustomed may not sit well with us, yet we are living out grace towards others as ongoing acts of social responsibility. Mary and Joseph's situation was not ideal, yet Jesus was born and with the incarnation, God was literally with them in Jesus. This year, our situation is not ideal, we long to be together, we want to keep our time-honored traditions, we want Christmas to be what it has always been if not more. We don't just want a little Christmas; we need a whole lot of Christmas.

Advent and Christmas will be different for us, but we will still experience God with us, Emmanuel. We will continue to offer meaningful worship services and we do have a few indoor experiences. New this year will be a "Walk to the Manger" and an outdoor candlelight gathering on Christmas Eve. As you will see in this booklet, we will still journey to the manger, and we will still celebrate how God is with us, Emmanuel. I pray that in these trying times, you will still experience our God who continues to come to us and meets us right where we are this year.

Grace and peace, Will

CHRISTMAS EVE

Candlelight Gathering

5.00 PM

This short outdoor gathering will allow us to come together to hear the Christmas story and a message of hope, before lighting our candles to celebrate the joy of Christ's birth as we hear "Silent Night" sung.

Candlelight gathering



PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

Space is limited. Registration spots are available on a first-come basis. If the gathering fills up, a waiting list will be started and we will consider adding a second gathering as needed.

Visit www.centreville-umc.org to register starting Nov. 20.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Worship Services

Our Christmas Eve worship services will be presented virtually online this year. We will pre-record the services so that they can be viewed on Christmas Eve at a time that is convenient for your family. All services will be available for viewing beginning at noon on December 24.

We will offer three different worship opportunities:

- **A Children's Christmas Pageant**
(See next page for details.)
- **A Traditional Candlelight Worship Service with Communion** (Pre-packaged communion elements are available from the church office during business hours.)
- **A Contemporary Candlelight Worship Service**

We are unable to offer in-person indoor worship services on Christmas Eve this year.



Children's Nativity Service

This will be a pre-recorded children's pageant that tells the Christmas story, and will include the children of CUMC. This service will be available to view online with your family starting at noon on Christmas Eve.

There are speaking and non-speaking roles available for all of our children. The pageant will be recorded in parts in a COVID-safe way.

If your child would like to participate in the pageant, please contact:

Joy Rangel at: jrangel@centreville-umc.org
or Laura Hesse at: lhesse@centreville-umc.org



A *Light* in the Darkness

Advent Sermon Series

In this season where it truly feels like darkness surrounds us, we are invited once again to come into God's presence, to experience the transformative love of the incarnate Son, to be awakened anew to the touch of the Holy Spirit, and then be restored by the overwhelming grace of God which heals our souls. Join us for livestream worship on the four Sundays of Advent as we explore the age-old advent themes of Peace, Hope, Love and Joy.

Peace *Hope* *Love* *Joy*



Walk to the Manger

A Self-Guided Christmas Reflection Experience

December 18: 6-8pm

December 19: 2-4 pm and 6-8pm

Persons of all ages are invited to experience the story of Christmas through a guided meditation walk through Centreville UMC. Hear the Good News from the angels, stand in awe with the shepherds, offer gifts like the Magi did, explore the message of the Chrismon symbols, and much more as you reflect on the joy of the coming of the Christ child.

Preregistration is required for this event. Slots are limited and will be given on a first-come basis. One family unit will walk through the stations at a time.

**To register, visit www.centreville-umc.org
starting November 20.**

Participants will receive a gift bag with candles for Christmas Eve Candlelight services, a Christmas tree ornament, a special storybook for children and sweet treats.

Participants must register in advance for a designated time to attend. Space is limited. The experience will take approximately 35 to 40 minutes. More event details and registration can be found on the church website starting November 16.

Volunteers will be needed for set-up, clean-up, and staffing the event on both days. To volunteer contact, Pastor Marti, mringenbach@centreville-umc.org

Each family is invited to make and bring an ornament to place on the Christmas tree as a gift to Jesus at the Magi station.

If you are doing the Reverse Advent Calendar (available in the ADVENTure Boxes), you may place those gifts under the tree as well.



ADVENT NOON CONCERT SERIES

IN-PERSON AND LIVESTREAMED

WEDNESDAYS

DECEMBER 2, 9, 16 & 23

FEATURING OUR CUMC

MUSIC STAFF:

DAVE BROWN

LAURA HESSE

BECKY JACKSON

JASON MOON

In-person space is limited
Pre-registration is encouraged

To register, visit www.centreville-umc.org
starting November 20.

L essons & Carols

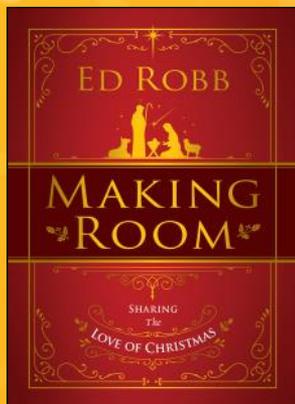


Sunday, December 13
7:30 PM
Offered Online via Livestream

Scriptures and writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer will be combined with anthems, Advent hymns and Christmas carols to help us celebrate the coming of Christ into our world and our lives. Readers, soloists, Voices In Praise, Chancel Choir and Jubilation will share in the service.



Study Opportunities



Making Room

By Ed Robb

Led by Rev. Will Montgomery

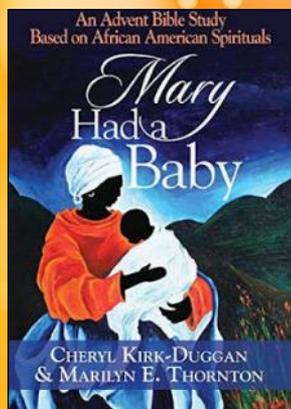
Nov. 29—Dec. 20

Sun. 7:00 PM

4 Weeks

Book \$12

Learn how to make room in your heart for God and neighbor this Christmas. This four-week study explores the warmth of welcome at Christmas following interactions with the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the magi. The story of Christ's birth encourages us to widen our borders and increase our sense of community—and make room for others.



Mary Had A Baby

By Cheryl Kirk-Duggan & Marilyn Thornton

Led by Rev. Marti Ringenbach

Nov. 30—Dec. 21

Mon. 10:00 AM

4 Weeks

Book \$14

This year Advent will be different. Maybe a different perspective in an Advent study is what you are seeking. Join Pastor Marti for an Advent Bible Study based on African American Spirituals. *Mary Had a Baby* has four sessions which include scripture, song lyrics, devotional and contextual information, and discussion questions to stimulate deepening faith and a sense of community. The four spirituals featured in *Mary Had a Baby* are "Mary Had a Baby," "Rise Up Shepherd and Follow," "Children, Go Where I Send Thee," and "Go, Tell It on the Mountain."

ADVENTure Box

Hey families,
Have you picked up your **ADVENTure** Box?

It is filled with fun activities for the whole family! You'll find cookie cutters, a shadow box craft kit, communion elements, candles and instructions for making your own Advent wreath, and even a Happy Birthday Jesus cupcake squeeze toy!

The boxes are available from the church, just inside the front entrance.

One per family please.





YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 20

6:15-7:15 PM

In the Recreation & Outreach
Center (ROC)

Share some fellowship time with friends and
enjoy some Christmas activities together.

Contact Jeremy Vest to sign up at
jvest@centreville-umc.org.





December 3
3:30-5:00 PM

Join us as we pack meals and some holiday treats for homeless men and women in Washington, D.C.
Contact Jeremy Vest:
jvest@centreville-umc.org.

Reverse Advent Calendar

The Reverse Advent Calendar is found in the ADVENTure Boxes (see previous page).

There are many in our community who are struggling this Advent and Christmas season. Use this Reverse Advent Calendar to give a gift each day of Advent to someone who is homeless or food insecure in our community. Find the day of Advent and purchase that item. Pick a few days, or do all of them—you choose. Donations may be placed in the shopping cart outside the church entrance or under the tree during the Walk to the Manger.



Holiday Food Baskets

That's right, with the holidays once again just right around the corner, CUMC will again provide Thanksgiving and Christmas Food Baskets to families in need in our community. As part of CUMC's continuing efforts to "feed the needs" of the community, the goal for 2020 is to provide a total of 200 food baskets, as well as to sponsor 100 "Fresh Food Packs." Each "Pack" will consist of a ham, turkey, or chicken, plus items such as eggs, butter, milk, and fresh fruit.

During the next few months, please prayerfully consider supporting this ministry by: (1) making a \$50 gift to sponsor a basket for a local family in need; and/or (2) making a \$43 gift to sponsor a "Fresh Food Pack" via the online giving portal using the link below.

Because the COVID-19 pandemic will almost certainly prohibit gathering in person, you can also support this effort by purchasing the supplies and making a basket at home! Whether you can help with one or a combination of the three, any support you can provide will be much appreciated and gratefully accepted!

Please contact Chris Granberg at chris.granberg@gmail.com to volunteer or for additional information.



Alternative Gift Market



Do you struggle to find meaningful gifts for loved ones who seem to have everything they need? The Alternative Gift Market provides a wonderful opportunity to support a great organization. CUMC is connected to while taking care of your shopping list.

Usually we offer an alternative gift market in December to support charitable organizations we work with as a church. This year, the market will be all online, and will focus on Helping Haitian Angels. We will again be offering the popular Haitian coffees, and our famous collection of hand-made Christmas ornaments. This year three types of ornaments will be offered. All items must be pre-ordered online by November 30, and items will be available for pick-up in mid-December.



All proceeds from the sale of coffee and ornaments, as well as any donations received, will be used to purchase furniture for the new classrooms at the Kay Anj School. Thank you in advance for your support!

Visit www.centreville-umc.org.



ANGEL TREE

The Angel Tree is when we purchase Christmas gifts for children and seniors who would otherwise not receive any. This year, instead of picking a tag off of the tree, you will select a tag from the online sign-up form.

The online Angel Tree is now live on our website. You will see a list of requested gift items for children and senior citizens, just like every year. This year we are supporting Jubilee Project and Hancock Manor Nursing Home in Sneedville, TN; Commonwealth Center in Staunton, VA; New Hope Fellowship Church in Fairfax; and Our Neighbor's Child right here in Centreville. All gifts are due back to the church on December 1. Visit www.centreville-umc.org to sign up.

Our Neighbor's Child
Help distribute gifts
December 13
1-4PM
sign up at www.centreville-umc.org

We will be collecting gifts for Our Neighbor's Child through the Angel Tree again this year. In addition, on Sunday, December 13 from 1:00 to 4:00 PM we will be a gift distribution site as well. Families will pick up the gifts from CUMC this year. If you would like to help with this distribution, sign up at www.centreville-umc.org starting November 20.

Packing/Set-up
December 10-11

Donations &
Volunteers
Needed!

Distribution
December 12



GRACE Ministries
of the United Methodist Church

Volunteers and donations are needed for our biggest food and clothing distribution of the year.

Donations of toys and household items and winter clothes (hats, gloves, jackets, sweatshirts, etc.) are welcomed beginning December 7.

To volunteer with set-up or the distribution, you need to sign up in advance. Visit www.centreville-umc.org.

COVID FOOD MINISTRY

Support our ongoing COVID relief efforts throughout November and December by helping to bag groceries or by serving at one of the weekly food distribution events. Sign-up slots are updated weekly at:

www.centreville-umc.org.





Christmas Decorating

Yes, we will be decorating the church for Christmas this year, just as always. However, we will be decorating over an extended period of time in smaller groups. If you would like to participate in decorating the church this year, you will need to sign up in advance. Decorating will be done during the day in 2-hour shifts. Below is the decorating schedule:

Narthex:	Thursday 11/19 & Friday 11/20
Sanctuary:	Monday 11/23 & Tuesday 11/24
Outside:	Monday 11/30 & Tuesday 12/1
Fellowship Hall:	Thursday 12/3 & Friday 12/4
Chapel:	Monday 12/14

Switch from Advent to Christmas Decorations: Monday 12/21

To sign up, visit
www.centreville-umc.org.





Poinsettia Tree

Remember a loved one by purchasing a poinsettia plant that will adorn the church in their honor/memory during the Advent and Christmas season!

If you would like to purchase a plant, the cost is \$15.00 per poinsettia. You can place your order and pay using the online giving program on the church website, www.centreville-umc.org. You may also place an order by calling the church office.

The deadline to place an order is **Friday, December 11.**

Poinsettias may be picked up after 1:00 PM on Wednesday, December 23.



During the Christmas season, please note the following special church office hours:

Holiday OFFICE HOURS



December 24-28: church office closed

December 29-30: church office open

December 31: church office open 9:00 AM—Noon

January 1: church office closed

Regular office hours resume Monday, January 4.



Throughout Advent we receive a special offering called the Advent Offering. These funds are designated toward a mission project each year.

This year's Advent Offering will be allocated to the United Methodist Committee on Relief for domestic disaster relief for the recent hurricanes and wildfires in the south and west.

To give to the Advent Offering, put "Advent Offering" on the memo line of your check, or give online by visiting www.centreville-umc.org. Thank you for your generosity.







CENTREVILLE

United Methodist Church

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www.centreville-umc.org

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