



DECEMBER 2017 MESSENGER



First UMC Azle



From the Senior Pastor

SENIOR PASTOR. SCOTT YOUNGBLOOD

Advent, which means "to come," is the season of four weeks preparing for Christmas. Right after Thanksgiving many of us begin to decorate our homes (and offices) for Christmas. Our decorations include the Christmas tree, wreaths, holly, lights (sometimes lots of lights) and maybe even some mistletoe. Decorating is one of the ways that we prepare for Christmas. However, the most important preparation for Christmas takes place on the inside of every Christian.

John the Baptist announced "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." For the Christian, Christmas has two major functions. First, we must prepare our own hearts that Jesus might be born in us again this Christmas. Second, we are always about preparing the way of the Lord that those who do not yet know of God's love in Jesus might see him not only in our beautiful decorations, but shining through our hearts.

Someone once asked, "Why would anyone watch a movie or TV program about the Titanic? We all know how the story ends." As Christians, we know how the story begins and we know how the story ends. Still we get closer to God preparing for His coming. And if we didn't know how the story ends, we wouldn't ever give His coming a second thought. Without Easter, there would be no Christmas. We celebrate the manger of Christmas because of the cross of Calvary. Christians were singing "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" and "Up from the Grave He Arose" long before anyone thought about singing "Away in a Manger." (No, I don't know exactly when each hymn was written). The point is that the Crucifixion and Resurrection were being celebrated long before anyone thought to ask, "When might Jesus have been born?"

Yes- go crazy decorating your home! Just don't forget about preparing your heart.

From the Associate Pastor

ASSOCIATE PASTOR. CAROL ROBERTS

According to the dictionary, Advent means "the arrival of an important person." In the Christian Church, Advent takes on a much richer meaning. Advent is the season in which we prepare our hearts and minds for the arrival of God who came to live with us in human form; Jesus! Advent is upon us.

This year, I have decided to focus on the arrival of the most important person, Jesus, throughout Advent. I choose to shut off the mindless chatter of marketing and commercialism and focus on the coming of the Christ. I choose to spend more time meditating on Scripture, reflecting on the love which brought God to earth to save me. I choose to stop, breathe in God's Holy Spirit, and experience God's peace - which is a gift from Jesus - instead of succumbing to our culture's chaos. Immanuel, God with Us; the true meaning of Christmas will be my focus this Advent season. Will you join me?

Music and Worship

DIR. MUSIC AND WORSHIP, MARGARET BOLDING

Next Sunday, December 3, begins the season of Advent.

Advent "...from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming" or "visit," begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year for Christians.

During Advent, we prepare for, and anticipate, the coming of Christ. We remember the longing of Jews for a Messiah and our own longing for, and need of, forgiveness, salvation and a new beginning. Even as we look back and celebrate the birth of Jesus in a humble stable in Bethlehem, we also look forward anticipating the second coming of Christ as the fulfillment of all that was promised by his first coming." - from umc.org

Upcoming Events - You Are Invited! Invite others to join you!

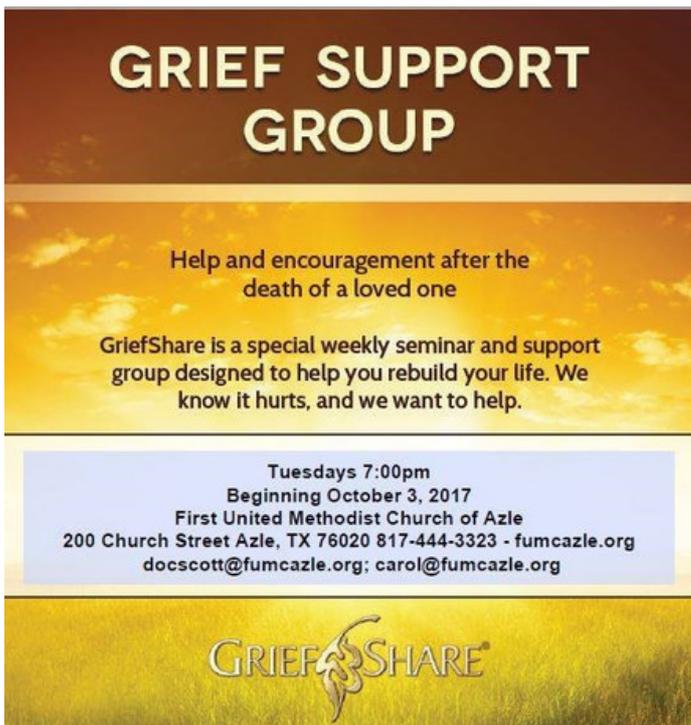
- November 29, 6:15 pm - After Wednesday supper there will be Hanging of the Greens. We can all decorate the church and enjoy Christmas music.
- December 2, 10 am, HUB - There will be Christmas music during the Women's Ministry Christmas Brunch. You don't want to miss it!
- December 3, 4 pm, sanctuary - There is an All-Church Christmas Carol Sing, and Children's Musical, "A Shepherd's Story," followed by refreshments for everyone and a FirstKidz Christmas party in the HUB.
- December 17 at 8:30 and 11 am, Sanctuary - the Youth and Chancel Choirs along with a Chamber Orchestra will present, "I Hear the Prophet Callin'" Christmas Cantata.
- December 18, 7 pm, Sanctuary - the Azle High School Choir department will present a Christmas Concert at our church.

December 24 Worship:

There are wonderful opportunities to come and to invite family and friends to worship with you at 8:30, 9:45, 11:00 am and 5:00 (focus on Children), 7:00, 11:00 pm.

GriefShare

Find the comfort and peace of God in a loving a supportive setting. Join us for our GriefShare support group, Tuesdays at 7:00 pm. Each session stands alone, so join us at any time!



GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Help and encouragement after the death of a loved one

GriefShare is a special weekly seminar and support group designed to help you rebuild your life. We know it hurts, and we want to help.

Tuesdays 7:00pm
Beginning October 3, 2017
First United Methodist Church of Azle
200 Church Street Azle, TX 76020 817-444-3323 - fumcazle.org
docscott@fumcazle.org; carol@fumcazle.org

GRIEF SHARE

Youth

DIR. YOUTH, JOSEPH CIZNEROZ

"After taking the bread and giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Luke 22:19 CEB

How much do we love food? How much do we need it? What would happen if we didn't have food?

Just as much as we need food to survive, water to drink, air to breathe, we need Jesus. This verse is used when we take communion but really should be applied anytime we eat or drink anything. To remember how much we need him, and to give thanks in remembrance of him.

Take time to remember your commitment to Christ today.

Announcements:

Winter retreat is coming quickly. We will be going to Glen Lake in Glen Rose December 8th-9th. We will meet at the church Friday, December 8th at 4:30 pm and will not return to the church until Saturday, December 9th at 6 pm. Please email me if you haven't let me know you are coming.

My email is: joseph@fumcazle.org

Serving Ministries

DIR. MISSIONS. KEN LEEMON

I didn't want to lead the A.M.A. Thanksgiving dinner this year. It's true! I spent a couple of months trying to talk myself out of it with one lame excuse after another. We could go visit family this year, we could hibernate in front of the TV watching football, and of course, it's too much work! So, here's what happened:

I met with Paula Ambrose for our first of several meetings. She was wearing a surgical boot, having pulled ligaments and tendons in her ankle. She was all smiles and ready to go again this year. We decided on a day to shop for supplies, and she with her boot and I with my brace hobbled thru three different stores asking for donations while filling our carts. As I watched her smile and talk to all she met I started to feel bad about my poor attitude. Then, the donations started to come from the A.M.A. members, businesses, and individuals. People started offering things we needed but I hadn't asked for. Things were coming together so easily that I wondered when the other shoe would drop. It never did. I had prayed to God for his leadership because I didn't feel worthy and He took charge. He cleared my head of doubt and gave me the direction I needed to fulfill my part of this ministry. Monday we baked dessert, Tuesday we baked 27 turkeys and 4 hams, Wednesday we carved and made dressing (stuffing), and Thursday we finished cooking and were ready to serve our guests. Thanks to all who volunteered; you took your positions so seriously, professionally and with so much of God's love. You are too numerous to name, just know God has a special place in his heart for you.

The score: 350+ ate on site, 65 meals were delivered to the homebound, 100+ were takeout meals, 35 volunteers, and the balance about 50 meals taken to the Presbyterian Night Shelter. Total: 600+ meals! God is so good! Thanks to all who helped; hope to see you back next year.



ASSOCIATE PASTOR CAROL ROBERTS



Please join us for the All-Church Christmas Carol Sing at 4:00 Sunday, Dec. 3. Then support the Children's Choir by enjoying their musical. Afterwards, join us for the FirstKidz Christmas Party. We'll begin with an all-child Christmas game in the FLC, then move to the HUB for crafts and cookie decorating. Expect a special visitor... Judy Sheridan has graciously offered to take photos of your children with our guest. Thank you, Judy!

Our **FirstKidz Hat and Mitten Tree Mission begins Dec. 3rd**. Please bring new children's hats, mufflers, mittens and gloves and place them on the tree in the Lower Atrium. As our tree looks merrier, more area children will feel warm and cozy. Thank you for supporting the FirstKidz Hat and Mitten Tree Mission!

The **Confirmation and Youth Retreat is Friday and Saturday, December 8-9!** We'll gather at the church at 4:30 p.m. The students will pack a sack lunch (food provided) then board the bus for Glen Lake by 5:00 p.m. We'll return to the church by 6:00 p.m. Saturday.

Mark Your Calendars: **Next Confirmation Class is Sunday, Dec. 17th at 5:30 p.m.**

FirstKidz Worship Leaders Classes resume Nov. 29th and run through Dec. 13th. Those students leading the 5:00 Christmas Eve Service will hold an extra practice the week of Dec. 17th; date to be determined.

UpWard Basketball and Cheerleading - Late Registration and Evaluations Saturday, Dec. 9th from 9:00 a.m. - noon. Join now! Practices may begin as early as the week of Dec. 25th.

Assimilation and Discipleship

DIRECTOR OF ASSIMILATION AND DISCIPLESHIP, MONICA GOTH

Isaiah 7:14 *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*

During the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, may we remember why we celebrate.

Mary did you know that your baby boy will one day walk on water

Mary did you know that your baby boy will save our sons and daughters

Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new

This child that you delivered will soon deliver you

Important information below please read!!!

- JOY Group will not meet in December. The January meeting will be the 23rd at 11 a.m.
- Homebound Ministry FUMC Azle- Thank you again for all who have volunteered. We are thankful. If you know of someone who could use a visit from one of our volunteers, please contact Monica Goth or the Church office.
- Packages to our college students will be mailed out in the next few days. Please contact Ro Hodges or Monica Goth if you would like to assist with the care packages!

Women's Christmas Brunch

The Women's Christmas Brunch is Saturday, December 2nd at 10 am in the HUB! All women of the church are welcome. Please contact Janet Hargrove for more information.

Book Club

The Book Club will meet at the church at 4:30pm on Monday, December 4 and travel together to Macaroni Grill to plan their 2018 selections.

Office Volunteers

We have a need for volunteers for our church office receptionist schedule! There's an immediate need for Tuesday afternoons, but we always need people with flexible schedules. For this position, we need Christ-centered people looking to answer phones, handle paperwork, and assist staff as needed with extra tasks. If you feel God calling you here, please contact **Janet Hargrove** at (817) 999-0600.

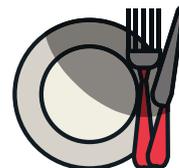
Finances

Monthly Budget.....	66,798
November Contributions to Date.....	77,937
Annual Budget.....	801,575
YTD Budget as of 10/31/17.....	667,980
YTD Contributions as of 10/31/17.....	631,509

Wednesday Night Dinner

Our menu for this week is:

Beef and Chicken Enchiladas
Taco Salad
Queso, Salsa, Chips
Dessert



Advent Devotion

<http://bit.ly/2AAIk8Q>

Good N.E.W.S.

Please remember to return your senior gifts by Sunday, December 3rd.

December 1 - 8 Birthdays:

Getting a card in the mail is so nice, send a birthday greeting to someone below.

John Roberts 1, Christian Shepherd 1, Landon Mackey 1, Ken Leemon 2, Michael Millsap 4, Terry Marie Clontz 4, Julianna Gibson 4, Amanda Overstreet 5, Michelle Potts 5, Rebecca Johnson 5, Charity Clark 5, Sharla Bursey 6, Kylie Wrinkle 6, Fred Bates 7, Don Autry 8, Richard Bohn 8, Marcy McCamish 8, Monica Goth 8, Tim Baker 8, Ryan Barnett 8, Tanner Tadlock 8.

Birthday list is taken from REALM information, if you or a member of your family's birthday is not listed, contact Monica Goth or the Church office so we can get this information recorded. Thank you.



Eagle Mountain Pregnancy Help Center

The Eagle Mountain Pregnancy Help Center needs the following items: disposable diapers sizes 3,4, and 5; Similac in the Orange can; and baby wipes. Bring donations to the EMPHA tub in the lower atrium, and Sue Wall will deliver them to the center.