

Wesley United Methodist Church – Bloomington, Illinois
Incarnation: Emmanuel - God with us.
December 13, 2020
Third Sunday in Advent

Greeting

Family Advent candle lighting by Craig, Kelsey, Davis, and Andi Lutes

Organ Prelude

Improvisation on See Amid the Winter's Snow – Goss
John Stombres, organist

Scripture Call to Worship

Isaiah 7:14 (NRSV)

14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Opening Prayer

Opening Hymn UMH #240 *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

Children's Time

Anthem

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing -arr. Raney
Ellen Hagen and Kim Snyder, piano duet

Scripture

Matthew 1:18-23 (NRSV)

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah¹⁸ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

Sermon

Incarnation: Emmanuel - God with us.

Rev. Sara L. Isbell

Sermon Response Hymn UMH #211 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* vs. 1, 2, 6 and 7

Prayer Song

Emmanuel, God With Us - Austin Stone Worship

Matt Sherrill, guitar

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Invitation to and Blessing of the Offering

Closing Song

God With Us - Mercy Me

Matt Sherrill, guitar

Announcements and Benediction

Worship Participants
Reverend Justin Iverson, Liturgist
John Stombres, Organist
Matt Sherrill, Guitarist
Kathi Pritts, Children's Time
Ron Kiesewetter, Hymn Singer

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADVENT 2020: INCARNATION

This year Advent looks a little different. Families are staying home; shopping is done online; carolers are visiting friends by phone. It's a season to remember that God didn't wait for us to gather all together in heaven to meet us face-to-face; God came to us – visited us where we lived – brought the kingdom to us in the form of a baby boy. Divine Presence took on human flesh – that's what Incarnation means.

This year Wesley will be bringing Advent "home" by looking at the ways Christ comes to us, right where we live. We'll be using Adam Hamilton's "*Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*," to look at the different titles describing Jesus – in His day and ours. Titles include: Messiah/King, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, Word made Flesh.

Advent Study

Incarnation will also be the theme of our Tuesday evening Advent study, using Hamilton's study book. The final sessions will meet by Zoom from 6-7 p.m. on December 15 & 22. Contact connect@wesley-umc.com if you need the zoom link.

Learn the meaning behind the names of Christ and the difference He makes in our lives this Christmas. His parents gave him the name Jesus. But the prophets, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels addressed him by other names. They called him Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, and Word Made Flesh. In *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*, best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth.

HOPE IN A WEARY WORLD - LONGEST NIGHT VIRTUAL SERVICE – DECEMBER 17

Longer nights and shorter days. Not everyone feels merry & bright during this season-especially in the midst of a pandemic. This service, co-sponsored by Wesley United Methodist & Normal First United Methodist Churches, is for all who find the holidays difficult, who search for healing, and who pray for wholeness. Join leaders from different faith traditions in our community as we acknowledge our hurting places and look for hope. You can join this service live on Thursday, December 17 at 7 pm – find the link at www.normalfirst.org .

THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS

Visit the sanctuary, which will be adorned for Christmas, **December 21st-23rd**. The sanctuary will be open from **9am-8pm** for you to enjoy prayerful reflection and private worship, and will feature a wooden nativity display, created especially for Christmas 2020. Christmas music will play overhead, and from **5:40pm-8:00pm** each evening, instrumentalists will provide music.

Sign up [online](http://www.wesley-umc.com) (www.wesley-umc.com) to attend one of the 20-minute evening sessions or call the Church office. Limited seating will be available, so sign up early. A special commemorative Christmas ornament will be given to everyone who visits the sanctuary any time on these days.

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS EVE

At noon on December 24, an online Christmas Eve service, featuring traditional carols, scripture readings, and Communion, will be posted to YouTube. ***Pastor Sally will make DVDs of the service available starting December 21st for those without internet access. Please call the Church office to request one.***

At 8pm, or another time of your family's choosing, share the joy of Jesus' birth with your neighbors by hosting a socially-distanced candles & carols - sing from your driveway. Extra candles can be found in your Advent Kit.

PAINT THE TOWN WESLEY: ALL - CHURCH WEDNESDAY NIGHT PROGRAM

Wesley UMC is finding new ways to do ministry during Phase 4 of COVID-19. Please plan to join us every Wednesday evening this fall for "Paint the Town WESLEY."

Wednesday, December 16 – MERRY & BRIGHT

Plan to join us on December 16th at 6:00 pm for a Wesley Christmas Light Competition! Watch out for a special e-mail blast releasing the addresses of 4 Wesley Family houses that are decked out for Christmas. Go on a driving tour around town to find your favorite and vote online for the house that wins the award for best display!

Wednesday, December 23 – THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS

This week's Paint the Town Wesley event will be *'The Sights and Sounds of Christmas.'* See event information in announcement above.

MISSION ADVENT OFFERING

Wesley Missions Advent Offering supports many local & state organizations and domestic missions. The state organizations are 10 United Methodist agencies that work to improve the lives of children, families, the elderly and sick. Give as you can by sending your contribution by mail to 502 E. Front Street, Bloomington IL 61701, or through the website – www.wesley-emc.com/give. Every donation is appreciated. For more information about these organizations, see the website <https://www.wesley-umc.com/category/news/>

LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS – LOVING OUR CHURCH STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Thank you, Wesley Church, for your faithfulness and generosity in our 2021 Stewardship Appeal! We are humbly grateful for your generosity at such a time as this.

Financial faith commitments for 2021 are still needed, and we encourage every Wesley member to be a part of assuring the love of Wesley Church in the coming year. So far we have received 189 cards received totaling \$812,838. If you need a card mailed to you, let us know; we'll be happy to send it. Every gift, no matter how large or small, is a sign of our gratitude for God's generosity, and a promise to Love God – Love Neighbor – Love You through Wesley Church.

Commitment cards may be submitted in any of the following ways:

1. Mail your commitment card to 502 E. Front St., Bloomington IL 61701
2. Use the electronic commitment card found at here (<https://www.wesley-umc.com/2020/10/2021-commitment-card/>)
3. E-mail our Business Manager, Myrna Simpson at msimpson@wesley-umc.com
4. Drop off the commitment card in a sealed envelope at the church Monday – Friday, 9am-3 pm

SURGE MEETING SUNDAY NIGHTS ONLINE

Surge (Grades 6-12) meets on Sunday nights! Our "Bonfires of Belonging" series welcomes all students to come and belong as a part of our Surge family while we join in fellowship, games and spiritual devotion.

UPDATE! Due to the growing number of COVID cases in McLean County, SURGE will move to online programming until further notice. Students are invited to join our zoom meeting room at 6:00 pm for a time of devotion, games, and fellowship.

EVERYONE (6th-12th grade) is invited from 6:00-6:30 for a game and then students will separate for their weekly small group meeting at 6:30. Link to zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87184121766>

Please feel free to contact Kelsey with any questions/concerns! 618-558-0748.

WESLEY DISTRIBUTION MINISTRY NEEDS

The following items are needed for the monthly paper goods distribution:

- Diapers – all sizes
- Diaper wipes
- Adult diapers
- Feminine hygiene items
- Bar soap
- Paper Towels
- 2021 calendars
- Scarves
- Ear warmers

You may drop off the items in the collection box located at the entrance door of Wesley West at any time, Monday - Friday. Monetary donations are welcome! CLICK HERE

(<https://www.wesley-umc.com/give/>) to give online (be sure to note WDM in the memo) OR mail to the church at: 502 E. Front Street, Bloomington, IL 61701

SHARING OUR LOVE WITH AREA HEALTHCARE WORKERS

As a member of the Carle BroMenn Delegate Church Association, we have a great opportunity to participate in a *card shower* to show our appreciation, support, and encouragement to the entire Carle BroMenn staff. Please write a card or two (or more) to express appreciation to those who have gone above and beyond during this difficult time. **The completed cards should be delivered to the Unitarian Universalist Church at 1613 E Emerson, Bloomington. A collection container can be found at the front of the Church.**

Items to consider:

1. Cards do not need to be holiday related or individually addressed.
2. Please sign the card and include Wesley UMC.
3. Individually wrapped treats or gift cards are always appreciated.

IS GRIEF GETTING TO YOU? GRIEFSHARE CONTINUES THROUGH MARCH

The year 2020 has been tough so far. Most of us feel we have lost much of what we took for granted and counted on: family get-togethers, social events, communal worship – not to mention school, jobs, income – and, of course, the lives and health of people we love. Most of us are carrying grief. **GriefShare** is a grief support group hosted by church groups of all denominations. It is led by a trained facilitator, and includes video and small-group discussion.

Cornell UMC in Cornell IL will be offering weekly GriefShare sessions starting Tuesday, Dec. 1, continuing through March 2. United Methodists of any congregation are welcome to participate. For more information, contact Darcy Woodburn at cornellumc@gmail.com, or click [Cornell United Methodist Church group - GriefShare](#) to register. All sessions are free.

COVID-19 UPDATE FOR BLOOMINGTON WESLEY UMC

On December 9, Bishop Beard released a new statement for the churches of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference. The statement advises IGRC churches to refrain from in-house worship through the month of December and “until further notice.” Read the full letter [here](#). (<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Pastoral-Letter-from-Bishop-Frank-J--Beard.html?soid=1101770231079&aid=i8gzQO8EfhQ>)

We know Advent and Christmas are times the Church longs to be together for worship, and we acknowledge the disappointment and grief that many Wesley members are feeling as the pandemic stretches into 2021. But Wesley Church will continue to keep the safety and health of our members and staff at the top of our priority list and will continue to offer regular worship and children’s Sunday School, daily devotions, weekly study opportunities, terrific “Paint The Town Wesley” events, and so much more, via internet. We are all in this together, Church, and we’re going to make it through! Click [here](#) to learn how this will affect Wesley UMC: <https://www.wesley-umc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Covid-Tier-3-mitigations-update-Dec-9-2020.pdf>