

Kedron United Methodist Church



Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open doors The people of The United Methodist Church

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The Kedron Connection

December 2023

Volume 40

Issue 12

Would You Have a Party Without Making the Punch?

Decades ago, I heard my friend, the late Bishop Bos Spain, deliver a devotion in which he used the above phrase. While punch has fallen out of common usage in today's entertaining culture, the point is still worth remembering: parties and celebrations take planning and involve some excitement while waiting. The same is true of the celebration of Christmas.

Advent is a time of preparation. No one knows when Christians started observing Advent; but it was known as an established practice by about 480 A. D. (Contemporary calendars have replaced the formerly used, "Anno Domini," [A.D.], or, Year of The Lord] with C. E., meaning "Common Era.") The term, "Advent," comes from a Latin word used to translate the word from the Greek New Testament meaning, "coming Kingdom." It simply means "coming," or "arrival," referring to the Second Coming of Christ. In Christianity today, Advent refers to (1) the first coming of Christ into the world at Bethlehem; (2) the present coming of Christ into our hearts; and (3) the future return of Christ.

Advent is intended to give The Church an opportunity to prepare for the coming celebration of Christmas. Even the secular world prepares for Christmas; and people who have no real belief in Jesus or intention to honor His birth make all kinds of preparations for many different forms of celebration. Christmas giving is in imitation of the giving of gifts by the Magi, commonly referred to as the Wise Men. Although the Bible does not mention a number, tradition has taken the number of Wise Men from the number of gifts mentioned: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The commemoration of their visit is observed in the Church on Epiphany. Epiphany literally means, "upon the face," as in "to look upon the face." It is a term that has come to observe the first time a Gentile looked upon the face of Jesus (meaning, of course, the Wise Men, who were probably Zoroastrian in faith).

And then, I'd simply like to add this word about Christmas. Christmas is a shortened form of "Christ's Mass," or a time for observing the Roman Catholic holy communion. The term no longer carries that exact interpretation for Protestants and those who do not relate their understanding of the meaning of Holy Communion as it came to be observed in the Roman Catholic church. (Some denominations do not readily think of themselves as Protestants, but simply as "the one true church." Historians and scholars now think that Jesus was born in a summer month, since shepherds were out in the field, tending their sheep. (I've been in Jerusalem and Bethlehem in January during the Orthodox observance of Christmas, and it snowed on us!) Historians think that the observance of the birth of Christ may have been moved to coincide with the Roman observance called the "Saturnalia," a Roman festival for their god, Saturn.. December 25 was also the mid-winter solstice. Christians could have easily hidden their celebrations of the birth of Christ while the Romans were celebrating their festivals at the same time. Christmas has been attested since the Second Century, A.D.; but, there are denominations that do not observe Christmas in most forms (e.g., no Christmas decorations, including a tree, no gifts, no sacred music) since the exact date can not be known. For most of the rest of the Christian world, it is more important to celebrate the birth of the Savior than to know the exact date.

The reason I mention all of this is to help the membership understand why we are preparing to celebrate Christmas in the way we do. I am a firm believer in knowledge—not as a substitute to faith, but as a valuable resource in helping us understand many of the things we do and believe as Christians.

Finally, I'd like to say something about "Xmas." Many well-intentioned people condemn this usage, saying that it "X's Christ out of Christmas." In fact, it is one of the most ancient and original ways of referring to the time of the birth of Christ in that "X" was used as a kind of abbreviation for "Christ." Christ is spelled, "Christos" in the original language of the New Testament. The X, or "chi," is the Greek letter for "ch."

Michael O'Bannon, Pastor

Administrative Council

Our council will meet on **January 21st, 2024**
At 1pm.

Fellowship Supper

No Fellowship supper until **March 2024!**

Men's Breakfast

Dec. 2nd,, 2023 at 8 AM, ladies are welcome!!

Bucket Offering

Our December Bucket offering taken on Sunday morning worship will be donated to: **Food Bank**

Food Bank

You may bring food donations for the local food bank on the 1st and 2nd Sundays of the month. Place the donations on the pew in the narthex. The food will be delivered to the food bank. The Suggested item for December is **canned fruit**. All non-perishable food is accepted and appreciated.

Happy Birthday

Alfred Rhodes	Dec. 12th
Jane Watts	Dec. 24th

Anniversaries

David & Freddie Myrick	Dec. 28th
Pastor Michael and Anne O'Bannon	Dec. 29th



December Calendar

Saturday Dec. 2nd 8:00am Men's Breakfast

Sunday Dec. 3rd, 8:45 am Sunday School
9:30 am Church Service 1st day of Advent
3:00pm Middle TN Choral Society, MTSU, Hinton Hall

Sunday Dec. 10th, 8:45 am Sunday School
9:30 am Church Service, 2nd day Of Advent

Sunday Dec. 17th 8:45 am Sunday School
9:30 am Church Service, 3rd day Of Advent. **Christmas Program**
And finger food after service

Sunday Dec. 22nd 1st Day of Winter

Sunday Dec. 24th 8:45 am Sunday School
9:30 am Church Service, 4th day Of Advent
6:00 pm Christmas Eve Service,
Locke's Methodist Church

Monday Dec. 25th Christmas Day

Sunday Dec. 31st 8:45 am Sunday School
9:30 am Church Service
New's Year Eve

January 2024 newsletter info due to Dee Rouse by December 26th 615-574-9320 or ddrouse10@gmail.com

Resources Available

Resources for various kinds of help/support for you or someone you know that might benefit from counseling and/or spiritual support are listed below:

Insight Counseling Center, Murfreesboro
615-383-2115 for in person or online/phone counseling.

Upper Room Prayer Ministry **615-340-7200**
Talkspace.com Online/phone counseling

Methodist News Source

www.umnews.org

Stones River District Office
P.O. Box 12191
Murfreesboro, TN 37129



A Prayer for a Peaceful New Year

God of all time, help us enter the New Year quietly,
thoughtful of who we are to ourselves and to others,
mindful that our steps make an impact and our words
carry power.

May we walk gently.

May we speak only after we have listened well.

Creator of all life, help us enter the New Year
reverently, aware that you have endowed every
creature and plant, every person and habitat with
beauty and purpose.

May we regard the world with tenderness.

May we honor rather than destroy.

Lover of all souls, help us enter the New Year joyfully,
willing to laugh and dance and dream, remembering
our many gifts with thanks and looking forward to
blessings yet to come.

May we welcome your lavish love. In this new year,
may the grace and peace of Christ bless us now and in
the days ahead.