



The people of The United Methodist Church

# E-MESSENGER

Open hearts  
Open minds  
Open doors

Saint Luke United Methodist Church

Volume 2021, No. 48

Wednesday, December 22, 2021  
Available at: [www.st-luke-umc.net](http://www.st-luke-umc.net)



## God, Where Are You?

I want to share an article I wrote in 2018, it is worth repeating at this time of the year when we feel the joy, the blessings, the love, the excitement, and also the loneliness, the pain, the struggles, emptiness, and stress of the hustle and bustle of our daily lives.

It makes sense that Christmas would be a story that ultimately deals with home and real life. It speaks of how a loving God looked down on a lost, dark, and hopeless world and decided that through the birth His son Jesus, came here to earth to live with us. And God did. God removed a heavenly robe and wrapped himself in human skin.

And so often in the midst of our own life circumstances, we can forget that God did just that. That Jesus came. And that Jesus stayed. In the midst of tragedy, loneliness, loss and confusion, in the midst of a season that can so often magnify the good things but just as easily the negative, we find ourselves asking "God, where are you?" "God, you couldn't possibly understand how I feel or what I'm going through." On the Christian journey we can often stop and ask, "How would God act and what would God do if he lived here on Earth?"

Though it is an honest and worthwhile question, the truth is that God has lived here...God does understand...and when we ask where God is, He replies simply, 'I am HERE, I am Emmanuel.' God is not distant. Jesus is real. He knew real love, real pain, real rejection, real loneliness, real suffering and isolation, and real death. That's life, is it not?

Max Lucado describes it brilliantly when He says, *Watch me speak your language, sleep on your earth and feel your hurts. Behold the maker of sight and sound as he sneezes, coughs and blows his nose. You wonder if I understand how you feel? Look into the dancing eyes of the kid in Nazareth; that's God walking to school. Ponder the toddler at Mary's table; that's God spilling his milk.*

In the midst of a busy and bustling season, filled with places to go and people to see, we can far too often keep God on the fringe of our lives. My prayer for you is that you will find and experience peace for your troubles, forgiveness for your guilt, God's presence for your loneliness, God's light for your path, God's guidance for your journey, and God's joy for your life. I pray that all your burden will be a little lighter, your hope a little deeper, and your faith a little stronger. Remember, God will never leave you and never forsake you. That is our God given real promise. Emmanuel. *'...I am with you always.'* Matthew 28:20.

Sunday, the choir and orchestra presented the message of Christmas so beautifully through scriptures, songs, and words telling the story of our dear savior's birth. Thank you Mark Chandler for your leadership in putting it all together. Merry Christmas to All and a Happy New Year!

*In Christian love and grace, Mel*



The entire staff of St. Luke United Methodist Church wishes you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Rev. Mel Bishara, Pastor Abel Ditu, Mark Chandler, Randy Fox, Stanislas Ndecky, Susan Briles, Debbie Diviney, Anna Allen, & Ray Savell



## Upcoming Christmas Services

**Friday, December 24**

6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
Join us for In-Person Worship or Online Worship  
via our Facebook page or You Tube.com  
SLUMC—Haltom City TX

**Sunday, December 26**

10:30 a.m. Morning Worship Service  
2:00 p.m. French Congregation  
Christmas Worship Service

**Friday, December 31**

9:00 p.m. French Congregation  
New Year's Eve Fellowship



We are saddened to announce that Bill Hood passed away Saturday, December 18. The burial will be private and for family only. Please keep Toni, Deana and the rest of their family in your thoughts and prayers.



## 2021 Christmas Poinsettias

*In honor of Gary Allen*

*Given by Anna Allen*

*In memory of James L. and Billie Angle*

*Given by George & Karen Angle*

*In memory of Doris Wallis*

*Given by Amy Bibb*

*In memory of Najib & Debbie Bishara,*

*Milad & Jamal Bishara,*

*Bob & Peggy Christian*

*Given by Mel & Susan Bishara*

*In memory of Bob Bradley*

*Given by Beverly Bradley*

*In memory of Dr. Robert Chapman*

*Given by Martha Chapman*

*In memory of Jim Harter*

*Given by Bonnie Harter*

*In honor of our grandchildren,*

*Seth, Levi and Kennedy*

*Given by Buddy & DeeDee Hill*

*In memory of Bill Hood, J. C. & Gracie Jackson*

*Given by Toni Hood*

*In memory of Gordon Jones*

*Given by Barbara Jones*

*In memory of Fred & David Mason*

*In honor of Linda Wills*

*Given by Sandra Mason*

*In memory of Grady Payne*

*Given by Joyce Payne*

*In honor of Gary & Judith Reeves*

*Given by Bill & Roberta Reeves*

*In memory of Patsy Sullivan*

*Given by Virgil & Ann Van Schuyver*



Please pick up your poinsettia plants after the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

Thank you!



**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK...**

**Continued Prayer Concerns:** Jeanne Anne Pharis; Scott Paris; French Congregation & the people of the Congo; Pat Farmer; Doris Mobley's son, Don; Marilyn Smith's cousin, Kim Masters; Jack & Jerrie Lucko; Vicki Kovar; Hilaire Lukalema; Lisel Richardson's Aunt Vicki; Leslie Duncan's aunt, Ruth Smith; Joyce Hejl's brother & sister-in-law, Mike & Marianne Hejl; Sam & Ann Kiker; Judy White; Ross & Betty Longeway; Howard & Kara Schwoppe & their family; Sandra Mason; Pastor Ditu's sisters, Ruth & Marie; Wynelle Hencke; Byron Lechler; Bill & Roberta Reeves; Sarah Harris' husband, Tom; Lydia Acosta's daughter, Donna & her husband, Alfred; Carolyn Hodge; Martha Smith; Jane West; Bill Worthington; George & Karen Angle's daughter-in-law and sister-in-law, George & Mary Paris' sister, Jackie; David & Kay Stapp; Linda Smith; Tommie Martin's nephew, Scott Pashby & his family; Betty Holshouser's daughter, Lori; Loree Paris; Norm & Betty Turnage; Patty Tucker's sister; Lydia Acosta; Art & Cathy Gordon's granddaughter & great-grandson; Jim Long; Bill Worthington with the loss of his brother; Mickie Fletcher & family with the loss of her nephew; Barbara Provenzano's sister, Patricia Wiles; Patty Tucker; Judy White; Joe & Betty Crawford; George Angle's brother, Jim; Jack Bostick; George Conant; Mary Ruth Ellis' sister, Georgia Duncan; those affected by the tornados in Kentucky, Arkansas, Illinois and surrounding states; Betty Holshouser; Burt Moore with the loss of his sister and cousin

**This Week's Concerns:** Toni Hood, Deana Hughes & family with the loss of Bill; Suzanne Nickel's nephew, Billy Phipps; Dayna Cox; Ovella Russell; Amy West's sister, Keith West; the people of Haiti and Afghanistan; prayers for our nation; those affected by COVID-19; our first responders, doctors, nurses, essential employees & frontline workers

**Military:** Ryan Kelly Hampton; Kyle Johnson; Sam Burnett; Krystal Calvert; Evan Hill; Matt Miller; Nathaniel Hill; Alex Sullivan-Green; Harrison Lenox



The church office will be closed December 24, 27, 31 and January 3 for the Christmas holidays.

The church newsletter will not be published December 29, but will resume January 5, 2022.



*Wednesday Morning Bible Study*  
*Book of Ephesians*  
*January 5 • 10:00 a.m. • Fellowship Hall*  
*We invite you to join us.*

# SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

## EMMANUEL CLASS:

We had 10 members present for class this week. Roxie's lesson was on American Christmas traditions. Please continue to pray for our class members who are on the prayer list.

## GENESIS CLASS:

We hope Susan Bishara had a wonderful birthday on December 20. Happy Birthday, Susan! Carmen was beaming last week as she shared the good news about her granddaughter who played softball throughout her growing up years and recently graduated from college. She was offered a job in west Texas where she will be teaching as well as coaching softball. Carmen is one proud Grandmother! The Hills are enjoying both sons arriving home last night for the holidays. They are indeed in Paradise this holiday enjoying their whole family being here for Christmas. The Wommack's are in East Texas celebrating the holiday with their daughter and her family. Barb Burnett shared that Bill enjoys his days on the golf course and usually makes it there twice a week. St. Luke Methodist Men were out at Walmart ringing the Salvation Army bell yesterday. Michael sure was glad that the rain went east and all they had to deal with was wind and chilly temperatures. I saw some great pictures of Charlie and Kelly at Bass Hall to see the Nutcracker. The Kasonga's were looking mighty good at a wedding. Busy times for all of us. We keep Dayna in our prayers as she lost a high school friend to cancer last week and is also undergoing some medical tests herself. Amy West's sister broke her foot, we hope her recovery goes smoothly. She also mentioned that due to parts shortages, Keith is still driving a rent car after his wreck this fall and he continues to have back issues that keep him seeking treatment. We also want to keep the Hood family in our prayers as Bill Hood passed away. As always, many of us have worries and anxieties on our hearts, others are recovering from illnesses or falls, not to mention the resurgence of yet another strain of COVID. We keep everyone in our prayers and ask God to heal and comfort those who are hurting and struggling.

## PARTNERS IN FAITH CLASS:

Happy Birthday, Raymond Hames! Hope it was a great one. We had 14 (well, 14-1/2 as Levi joined us partway through, such a sweetie!). Our class agreed to rotating leadership for 2022, since no single person is able to commit for all year. Snacks were by Esther and also the Moore's. Thanks! Our lesson was how the Old and New Testaments affect beliefs of three major religions today and why they differ in their interpretation.

Snacks next week: Linda Wills

## UPPER ROOM CLASS:

Only eleven members in class, but three members, Gloria Lechler, Bill Whisenant and Dr. Martha were preparing for their roles in the Christmas Cantata. I have to mention that the Chancel Choir Christmas Cantata was an outstanding production and added so much to the Christmas Season. We are so sad about the death of Bill Hood. Bill attended our Christmas Party on Wednesday and we enjoyed him being in attendance. George is getting better but still having problems with his back. Happy Birthday to Jack Bostick on December 31.

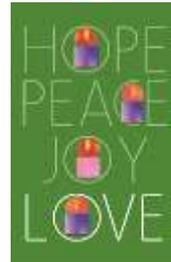
Devotional & Refreshments: Virgil & Ann Van Schuyver



**Holy Communion**  
**Sunday, January 2**  
*This Sunday during our online worship service we will be offering communion. Please have your elements ready so that you can participate.*



*I am in the process of updating the church directory. Please contact me with any change in your address, phone number or email address. You can send your changes to [office@st-luke-umc.com](mailto:office@st-luke-umc.com) or call the church office at 817-838-6834.  
Thank you, Susan Briles*



## ***In lieu of Christmas Cards...***

**Bill & Barbara Burnett** made a donation to the Helping Hands Fund.

**Bill & Leslie Duncan** made a donation to N.E.E.D.



*Join us for worship every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. for In-Person Worship or via our Facebook page or YouTube.com:  
**SLUMC—Haltom City***

***Sunday, December 26, 2021***  
***1st Sunday after Christmas***

***Children, Youth & Adult Sunday School - 9:15 a.m.***

### ***Weekly Attendance***

*Adult Bible Study • December 15—9*  
*United Methodist Men Breakfast • December 16—9*

***Sunday, December 19, 2021***  
***St. Luke UMC—10:30 a.m.***

*Sunday School—90*  
*In-Person Worship—144*  
*Online Worship—198*

***French Worship Service—2:00 p.m.***  
*In-person Worship—37*  
*Online Worship—199*



St. Luke United Methodist Church  
 3200 Denton Highway  
 Haltom City, TX 76117  
*Open hearts, open minds, open doors*

The *E-Messenger* newsletter is published weekly online. Deadline for submission of articles is 9:00 a.m. every Monday. The editor reserves the right to edit for content and space.

Senior Pastor: Rev. Mel Bishara  
 Phone: 817/838-6834

Editor: Susan Briles  
 Fax: 817/838-7631

Website: [st-luke-umc.net](http://st-luke-umc.net)

E-mail: [office@st-luke-umc.com](mailto:office@st-luke-umc.com)

Central Texas Conference website: [www.ctcumc.org](http://www.ctcumc.org)

Sunday Services: Sunday School • 9:15 a.m.

In-person and Online Worship • 10:30 a.m.

French Worship Service: In-person and Online Worship • 2:00 p.m.

Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Friday 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

## NEWS ESPECIALLY FOR YOU:

NEWSLETTER ONLINE AT:

[www.st-luke-umc.net](http://www.st-luke-umc.net)



### Sunday, December 26, 2021

#### *1st Sunday after Christmas*

9:15 a.m. Sunday School  
 10:30 a.m. Morning Worship Service  
 2:00 p.m. French Worship Service

### Monday, December 27, 2021

#### *Christmas Holiday—Office Closed*

No Newsletter this week

### Tuesday, December 28, 2021

No Activities Scheduled

### Wednesday, December 29, 2021

No Wednesday Activities Scheduled

### Thursday, December 30, 2021

9:00 a.m. UMM Breakfast - Bluebonnet Café  
 5:30 p.m. Prayer Group

### Friday, December 31, 2021

#### *New Year's Eve—Office Closed*

10:00 a.m. Second Chance Resale Shop

### Saturday, January 1, 2022

#### *New Year's Day*

10:00 a.m. Second Chance Resale Shop—Closed

### Sunday, January 2, 2022

#### *Epiphany Sunday with Communion*

9:15 a.m. Sunday School  
 10:30 a.m. Morning Worship Service  
 2:00 p.m. French Worship Service

### Monday, January 3, 2022

#### *New Year's Day Holiday—Office Closed*

### Tuesday, January 4, 2022

9:00 a.m. Newsletter DEADLINE

### Wednesday, January 5, 2022

10:00 a.m. Bible Study  
 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal



## Youth News:



Dear parents and youth,

We are continuing our study with the youth on the message of Advent. Our text is found in the Gospel of Matthew 2:1-2. This week we talked about the birth of Jesus. On that night, his star shined. The wise men went to King Herod to inquire about him. His birth raised jealousy in the heart of King Herod. He wanted to kill him, but God hid him to save his life. All because there was a purpose he was to accomplish. His birth was a mystery. He was not born in a five-star hotel with the best doctors. As a matter of fact, there was no place for him in the hotel. Therefore, his mother gave birth in a manger. How can it be? Greatness hid in a manger. He looked so innocent, yet he was the King of humanity sleeping in this manger. Many times, beautiful things come in disguise. Who would have thought that the King of Kings would be in a manger? He is bringing hope, restoration for all. Today's world is full of trouble, people are depressed, but this season, the message is clear. Christ is the reason for the season. How are we, as Christians, representing Christmas? This week, I thought about all the children in foster homes, some who are going through hard times because of Covid, some who could not afford Christmas gifts, and some who are sick. My heart went out for all the families experiencing life, and I lifted a prayer for all. Thank God, we have the best gift in Christmas, the gift of Eternal Life, the gift of hope, peace, and restoration. Let us share the joy of Christ around us in Christ's name.

Amen. Merry Christmas to everyone! *Stanislas Ndecky*