

PASTOR'S NOTE



Our Advent and Christmas season is now upon us. While it comes so quickly, it should not surprise us as stores have Christmas decorations up in October! Despite all the advertising I am certain that more than a few people will be scrambling to find something as late at Christmas Eve. Maybe there will be one Ronco product still on the shelf for all you last minute folks!

But more seriously, as I think about this principle of being prepared or being ready, it draws the real meaning of Advent more clearly to focus. This season is meant to prepare us for the comings of Christ. No mistake with the plural "comings". So we sing, O Come, O Come Immanuel and ransom captive Israel. This is a true anticipation of the first coming of Christ. Most of us are more familiar with Advent and Christmas representing the coming of Christ as a babe in the manger. This is the event that inspired Charles Wesley to pen the words, "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail the Incarnate Deity!" This first coming of Jesus was specifically to deliver us from captivity to sin and death. What more priceless gifts could we ask for or offer to others?

Yet, our Christian faith clearly teaches us about another Advent or Coming of Christ. It is often referred to as the Second Coming of Christ, or the Second Advent. This second coming of Christ is not as well discussed or talked about during this holy season. But preparation for this Coming of Christ is just as needed, if not more needed, than the first Coming of Christ. This Second Coming is a time when Christ will come in final victory and will reign supremely over all creation. As we say in our Creed every Sunday...He will COME to judge the quick and the dead.

The connecting point is that Jesus taught very clearly about being prepared because He will come at a time when least expected. This captivates my attention. The Christmas displays that start in October are visible signs that point us to the reality that Christmas is coming. We see them and walk by them daily. We might even grow cynical about the marketing and commercialization, and simply fail or refuse to be prepared. I must confess that I have found myself staring at ransacked shelves and lonely Ronco products on Christmas Eve!

But, I am praying that we will give heed to all the instructions and indications that our Lord is coming. One of my favorite Christmas songs puts it so well...Joy to the Word the Lord is Come (notice present tense, not just that he has come but is come and will come again). Let earth receive her King. Let every heart PREPARE Him room! And when we prepare Christ room, it will be a Merry Christmas. And from our family to yours, we pray it will indeed be a Merry Christmas!

Blessings,
Bill

Join Us Sundays for Worship & Fellowship

Come & Worship With Us

Christmas Eve

Everyone is Welcome

10 AM Combined Service

4 PM - Family Service
(Children's Choir Performing)

6 PM - Candlelight Service



6690 Spanish Fort Boulevard
Spanish Fort, Alabama
251-626-1334
www.spanishfortumc.org



Holiday Worship Schedule

December 3, 8:45 AM & 11 AM
Traditional Communion

December 10, 8:45 AM & 11 AM
Children's Choir Sings

December 17, 8:45 AM & 11 AM
Christmas Cantata - "JOY"

December 24, 10 AM One Combined Service,
4:00 PM Family Service and 6 PM Candlelight
Service

December 31, 10 AM - One Combined Service

Regular Schedule

Traditional Worship - 8:45 AM (Sanctuary)

Contemporary Worship - 11:00 AM (Sanctuary)

Coffee Fellowship - 9:45 AM (Fellowship Hall)



Poinsettias will decorate the Sanctuary this Advent season.

Click [here](#) for an order form so you may honor or memorialize a loved one with a poinsettia.

GO FISH!

We have more Invitation Cards to distribute as you invite others to worship! Please remember to sign your name on the card so they can look for you when they visit. These are available in the office and the Narthex of the Sanctuary. Go Fish!



Sunday Worship Times

8:45 AM - Traditional / 11:00 AM Contemporary

6690 Spanish Fort Blvd., Spanish Fort, AL 36527



ONLINE GIVING AVAILABLE...

Go to www.spanishfortumc.org and select online giving or **CLICK HERE** for more information and to give online. *all gifts are tax-deductible and a year-end giving statement will be prepared for you for tracking and tax purposes.

If you have a QR scanning app on your cell phone, simply scan this code for easy access to our online giving option.

If you would like to set up a regularly scheduled automatic withdrawal from your bank account, please contact Jan Webb in the church office at jan@spanishfortumc.org or 251-626-1334.

STUDY

Adult

MEN'S RETREAT...Men, mark your calendars for February 9-10, 2018 at Camp Baldwin. Cost is \$60.00. Register by calling the church office. Registration and monies due by February 1, 2018.

Youth

CATAPULT CHRISTMAS PARTY...All youth grades 6th-8th are invited to participate in the last Catapult of the season. Join us for Tackpult with food, fun, and fellowship on Wednesday, December 13, at 6:00 p.m. in the Youth Area on the West Campus.

REMEDY YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY...All youth 9th-12th grades are invited to join us Sunday, December 17, for an evening of fun, food, and fellowship. We will also go caroling! We will meet in the Youth Area on the West Campus.

Children



Mission Effort from our Children's Ministry

For the 2017-2018 year, our mission focus will be UMCOR Relief Health Kits. We will collect (and eventually assemble) UMCOR Health Relief Kits. UMCOR is a ministry of The United Methodist Church that is dedicated to alleviating human suffering around the globe. UMCOR's work includes programs and projects in disaster response, health, sustainable agriculture, food security, relief supplies, and more.

The children will participate and support this organization within The United Methodist Church by working to collect the different supplies necessary for UMCOR Health Kits that will be sent to aid their efforts around the globe. Our goal is for each month throughout the entire year we will designate a different supply item required by UMCOR for the Relief Health Kit, and that we will focus on collecting and do so for the duration of that month. In the Spring after we have collected all the items required, the children will have the opportunity to help assemble the kits.

UMCOR HEALTH KIT : DECEMBER ITEM

Band Aids (box of standard sized, 3/4 to 1 inch width only)

In January, we will collect combs (minimum of 6 inches of teeth, no pocket combs or picks) Please bring items to the drop off box in the Narthex of the Sanctuary or to the Kids' area on the West Campus.

When do they bring donated items: Children may bring items with them to normally scheduled worship and program times.

Where are donation drop boxes: Donation Tub locations are on the Main Campus in the Narthex of the Sanctuary, and SFUMC West Campus Room #WD104 (more commonly known as Extreme kids worship room)

If you have questions regarding this effort, please contact Jennifer Robertson, Director of Children's and Nursery Ministries at jrobertson@spanishfort.umc.

CHRISTMAS PARADE

parade.

Spanish Fort Christmas Parade...On December 2, SFUMC will have a float in the Christmas parade. Children are invited to ride on the float or walk in the parade. Please bring candy to throw to the crowd. We will meet at 8:30 a.m. behind the Premiere Theater at the Eastern Shore Center to line up for the

After the parade, our church family is invited to join us at the theater for the 11:00 a.m. showing of "The Star." Please bring money for tickets and concessions.



December 6th
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
Church wide event to kick
off the Advent Season!

Family crafts, games, music,
and the Agape Hands Puppet Team.

Family Advent Celebration

ADVENT CELEBRATION...On December 6, the Missions Team will hold a fund raiser spaghetti dinner in the Fellowship Hall from 5:15-6:00 p.m.

Donations are appreciated. Following dinner everyone is invited to join us in the Children's Area on the West Campus for Advent crafts and activities including the Agape Hands Puppet Team!

Blue Lake Elementary Winter Retreat

Blue Lake Elementary Winter Retreat is for current 3rd-5th graders. This is a great opportunity for kids to get a taste of camp and enjoy a weekend of growing closer to God with kids from all over Alabama and West Florida. The cost is \$115 by December 15th and \$125 after then. Registration is online through the following link: <https://www.bluelakecamp.com/winter-retreat.html> Paper registrations are available through the church office, if needed. The registration deadline will be Jan 19th.

We will be providing transportation for this event, so please let us know when you register so we can put your child on our bus list. Also, let us know if you are interested in being a chaperone. Any questions, contact Beth or Jennifer.

SERVE



MINISTRY FOCUS DURING ADVENT... We will be collecting supplies for the United Methodist Children's Home – Babies First Program. This is a group home in Mobile that houses young mothers and their children. *Please bring items to the church office or the Fellowship Hall by December 17.*

You may also bring cards or notes of encouragement that will be delivered with the supplies. Collection Items: New Twin Bed Sheets/Pillow Cases, Towels (bath size and wash cloths), Shampoo (full or travel size), Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Hairbrushes, Deodorant, Detergent (Dreft or Sensitive All only), and Hand Soap.

A Word from the Security Task Force: This is a newly formed team of members who represent different safety backgrounds and age levels within the congregation. We were commissioned by the Trustees to help craft a security policy for SFUMC. We have been meeting and are in the process of drafting a security policy that includes emergency training components for ushers/greeters, security for children/youth as well as older adults, disaster preparedness and safety procedures for all facilities. As we are in the beginning stages of creating and implementing a policy, please feel free to talk with us.

The members of this team currently are: Stuart Woods (Chair), Rev. Rebecca Rutherford, Roger Few, Caleb Reeves, Jacque Helms, Pat Shubird, Margie Walters, Ashley Harris (Trustee), Rob Colville (Trustee), Larry Davis, Jenni Dismukes, Jennifer Robertson, and Becky Comer.



The Uniform Closet is in need of men's sizes in shirts. All donations are accepted. You can bring them by the church office regular hours or to the Uniform Closet on Tuesdays from 8 AM to 12



during PM.

Wedding Director

We are in need of a Wedding Director here at SFUMC. This volunteer position allows you to be a part of the special day in a couple's life. You will meet with the bride and groom twice before the wedding, and then help facilitate the wedding day using SFUMC's policies and procedures as your guide. Please click [here](#) to learn more about weddings at SFUMC. Please call the church office with any questions.



Missionaries we support who are serving the Lord to the ends of the earth:

John and Lisa Hamilton; OMS International in Montevideo, Uruguay
Rob and Amy Ellis; New Tribes Missions in Tanzania, Africa
Ronnie and Nanny Calvert; Quito, Ecuador
Monica Maxwell; IMB Connecting, in Southern India

Connect @ MidWeek!
Adult Classes | **DINNER** | *Kid's Activities*

Come & Get Connected!

5:15 p.m. ~ Dinner
6:00 p.m. ~ Activities /All Ages

Menus for December

December 6: Spaghetti (Missions Fundraiser Dinner)
December 13: Pot Roast (Last Mid-Week of the Season)

Mid-Week Meal and Activities will resume January 10th.

COMMUNITY

Congregation Notes:

New Member:

Janelle Stephens on November 26, 2017

Baptisms:

Ashlyn and Haylee Davis, daughters of Trey and Brittany Davis on November 19, 2017

Deaths:

Our condolences to Rob Colville and family on the death of his mother, Margaret Colville, on November 29, 2017.

Our condolences to Steven McGough and family on the death of his wife and beloved SFUMC member, Alison McGough, on November 4, 2017.

Our condolences to Woody and Laura Snell and family on the death of Laura's father, Erik Lindstrom, On October 25, 2017.

Dear SFUMC Congregation,

Thank you to everyone for your thoughtfulness in celebrating with me as I retire. These last 20 years have been a true blessing for me. I have been able to experience life here at SFUMC through friendships, changes in our worship services and additions to our facilities, to the excitement of increasing numbers of ministries, in numbers of mission trip participants, and our congregation as a whole. A special thank you to my family in the church office! You are the most dedicated of servants. I will miss working with you.

God bless you!
Carmen Walker

A NOTE FROM FINANCE...All 2017 contributions must be mailed (postmarked), delivered to the church office (drop in the mail slot), or placed in the offering plate by December 31, 2017 in order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2017.

Church Office Holiday Closings

December 25th & 26th, Church Office Closed for Christmas Holiday
January 1st & 2nd, Church Office Closed for New Years Holiday

CONTACT DEADLINES....Please understand that all information for the next month's CONTACT newsletter must be submitted in writing to Carmen Walker, in the church office, no later than the 15th of the current month.

The CONTACT, as well as other publications/correspondence, are sent to you by email. If you are not receiving email publications/correspondence and wish to, please check "subscribe" when you register your attendance on Sunday mornings, or go to our website and click on Media/SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Note: If you "unsubscribe" to one email publication/correspondence from SFUMC, you will no longer receive ANY emails from SFUMC.

STAFF

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Beth Allen - Director of Family Ministries
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Church Office Hours: Monday-Thursday / 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. | Friday / 8:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.
251-626-1334 phone | 251-626-1325 fax

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