



## WHAT TIME IS IT? by Pastor Alan Felton

Christians mark time a bit differently than those outside the church. Sure, we use calendars and clocks to know the month and day and hour. This is chronological time and is necessary to keep us on schedule and help us be where we need to be on time.

Yet, Christians also mark time by hearing a story through the pages of the Bible. This sort of time is called *kairos* or God's time to act. Christians begin each week with worship on Sunday. We move through seasons such as Lent and Advent. We celebrate holy days of Christmas and Easter and Pentecost. The story of God's grace and our

salvation flows through the span of the Christian year.

Christians are not just passing time until Jesus returns but learning and acting as his disciples in the world as we know it now. Dr. James White writes in his book, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, "Far from trying to escape time, Christian worship uses time as one of its essential structures." Time marked by the Christian calendar reminds us of God's endless love and leads us to be faithful participants in God's work.

As another Advent season dawns, we are called to not only prepare

for Christmas but also to become disciples ready to follow Christ and serve our neighbors. Each Sunday in Advent will focus on a separate theme: hope, peace, joy, and love. These are what we strive to cultivate not only in the world around us but also in ourselves.

Let God's story move you through the weeks of Advent. As we draw closer to the manger in Bethlehem, may how we spend our time be marked not only by a calendar or clock but by hope in God, the peace and joy Christ brings, and the love with which the Holy Spirit embraces us.

*Thank you, Benson Memorial family, for contributing to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Hurricane Ian relief efforts. Thanks to your generous response, we raised \$1,510 in October for UMCOR. Well done!*





## HOLIDAY HELPERS CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

Due Sunday, November 27

The holidays are here, and we need your help to support our friends at our partner school, Jeffreys Grove Elementary School (JGES). During the entire month of November, we will be collecting donations to help families at JGES celebrate the holidays. There are multiple ways to get involved.

### CHRISTMAS

For many years now, we've helped our friends at Jeffreys Grove by donating gifts for families who could use a little help during the holiday. This year, we're doing our Christmas tree for Jeffreys Grove a bit differently. In years past, we have shopped for specific items on children's wish list. Now we'll be donating \$20 Target gift cards. This way, we're actually helping with two gifts: the gift for the child *and* the gift of empowering the parent to be able to do their own shopping for their child's present. Think of the joy you feel when shopping for the ones you love. That's the gift you'll be giving, too!

Throughout the month of November you'll find a beautiful Christmas tree in the narthex full of ornaments that represent our friends at JGES who need a little extra help this holiday season. If you'd like to commit to donating one \$20 Target gift card, please take one ornament off the tree (or feel free to take as many as you like!), then bring your gift card back any time during the month of November. There will be a box under the tree where you can put your gift card on Sundays, or you can drop it off at the church office Monday through Thursday between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. **Christmas donations are due on or before Sunday, November 27.**

Don't have the time to go purchase a gift card at Target, but would still like to help? Simply make a monetary donation to the church, putting "Holiday Helpers" in the memo, and we'll get the gift card for you!

Thanks so much for all you do to show our JGES family God's overwhelming love throughout the holidays and the entire year! If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Cortney Babajtis at [cortneypaige84@gmail.com](mailto:cortneypaige84@gmail.com).

*Thank You!*

## THANKSGIVING DONATIONS

### Thank you for your generosity!

As you sit around your tables with your families for Thanksgiving dinner, giving thanks to God for all the blessings in your life, know that I am thanking God for you and the way you continue to live out the calling God has placed on your life to love God and your neighbor. Because of your generous hearts and deep compassion and love for your neighbor, we were able to give 16 complete Thanksgiving meals to families at Jeffreys Grove! What an amazing blessing! Because of your generosity, 16 families will be able to gather around their table for a warm Thanksgiving meal having not had to worry about how they would provide it. I hope you'll take a moment to reflect on how big that is. Each meal included a gift card for turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, white potatoes, green beans, corn, cranberry sauce, macaroni and cheese, chicken stock, and cornbread.

I also want to give a special thank-you to the following people for delivering these meals: Pat and George Lee, Susan Brooks, Diane Rees, and Jo Balcome.

With so much gratitude,  
Cortney Babajtis, Minister of Families and Outreach



# CHRISTMAS

## AT BENSON MEMORIAL UMC



*Pick up a Christmas invite card (shown above) in the narthex on Sunday or in the church office.*

### PREPARE YOUR HEARTS DURING ADVENT

Advent is a time of preparing our hearts to gratefully receive the gift of Jesus Christ. The weeks of Advent provide ample time to be led by the Spirit into a closer relationship with God. As we draw close to God, we also can grow closer to our neighbors. Advent helps us renew and make new relationships with others.

As we travel together through Advent, prayerfully consider doing at least one of the following:

1. **Invite** a neighbor, a co-worker, or a friend to a church service. We have created Christmas invite cards to hand to someone you know to make it easier to invite them. Look for the cards at worship services or pick one up in the church office.
2. **Send** a card to a church member you haven't seen in awhile. If not a card, make a phone call and have a conversation.
3. **Read** slowly though the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke to experience again the awesomely wonderful story of Jesus' birth.
4. **Pray** and think upon the themes of Advent: hope, peace, joy, and love. How are these growing within you? How are sharing these gifts with others?
5. **Find** quiet moments amid all the busyness of this season to thank God for the many blessings in your life. Breathe deeply and enjoy God being present with you.

**[BensonMemorialUMC.org/Christmas](https://BensonMemorialUMC.org/Christmas)**

# ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT BENSON MEMORIAL UMC

The Christmas season is right around the corner, and we wanted to give you a look at our events and worship services you can take part in. We also encourage you to think of friends or family members you could invite to attend with you.

Full details about each Advent and Christmas service and event may be found at [www.bensonmemorialumc.org/christmas/](http://www.bensonmemorialumc.org/christmas/). Click on the "DETAILS" button under each event on the web page to open a pop-up window with all the information you need.

*Always be inviting! We will look for you at church!*



## Advent Study: Mary Had a Baby

Wednesdays, November 30 through December 21, 6:45 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Join us on Wednesday nights during the Advent season for the study, *Mary Had a Baby*. This four-week study will help us welcome the birth of Jesus through themes found in the Bible and African American Spirituals. The study will be held on November 30 and December 7, 14, and 21. Childcare is available by request.



## Birthday Party for Jesus

Sunday, December 4, 12:00 to 1:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall

You're invited to a special Christmas Sing-along Birthday Party for Jesus! It's free and everyone is welcome! We'll have pizza and cupcakes, play games, sing songs, and make a special craft. We ask that each child brings at least one unwrapped toy for the boys and girls at Methodist Home for Children.



## Christmas Cheer Sunday

Sunday, December 11, both worship services, PLUS noon in the Fellowship Hall

On Sunday, December 11, at both our 8:45 and 11:00 AM worship services, guest harpist Anita Burroughs-Price will perform beautiful Christmas music. Following the 11:00 AM service, stay for wonderful fellowship and a cookie exchange. Bring two to three dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies to share.



## Live Nativity

Sunday, December 18, 11:00 a.m. worship service, Sanctuary

Join us for an indoor live recreation of the Nativity at the end of the worship service. Our own wise men, shepherds, choir of angels, and Holy Family will recreate the Nativity so that we may rejoice in Jesus' birth and invite him deeper into our hearts this Christmas. Invite your friends and be sure to stick around after the living Nativity for hot chocolate and light refreshments in our Fellowship Hall.



## Blue Christmas / Longest Night Service

Wednesday, December 21  
7:00 p.m., Sanctuary

A special service for those experiencing loss or difficulty during this Christmas season.



## Christmas Eve Services

Saturday, December 24  
4:00, 7:00, and 11:00 p.m.  
Sanctuary

We're offering three services on this special holy night. Worship with us, and invite someone to join you!



## Christmas Day Service

Sunday, December 25  
10:00 a.m., Sanctuary

We will have one service this morning. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to come!



## CHRISTMAS CHEER SUNDAY

As the nights grow longer and we sink deeper into the winter's stillness, let the gentle silence remind us that it is a season to listen! What do you hear in the stillness of this winter? Join us on **Sunday, December 11**, for a very special day of music in worship that will feature Anita Burroughs-Price, the North Carolina Symphony harpist. Anita will be joining the Benson Memorial Chancel Choir for a performance of John Rutter's "Angels' Carol" at both services that day. As Rutter asks us in "Angels' Carol", *"Have you heard the sound of the angel voices, ringing out so sweetly, ringing out so clear?"*, you will be able to answer with an unequivocal "Yes!" when you come to worship on December 11!

*This is the first part of Christmas Cheer Sunday. The 11:00 service will be followed by a cookie exchange party in the Fellowship Hall. [Details here.](#)*

## 5 WAYS TO INVITE SOMEONE TO CHURCH

### Try these out this week!

1. Call someone you haven't seen in awhile and say you'd like them to sit with you at church then go out for lunch. Offer to pick them up (and maybe pay for lunch).
2. When you grab lunch at a drive-through restaurant, give the person who takes your order a printed invitation to church.
3. Make a new commitment to invite people every week. Make a checklist of people you often encounter: grocery clerk, boss, teacher, physical therapist, friend, yard guy, nail tech, relative, hair stylist, food server, dentist, mail carrier, employee, neighbor, etc.
4. Walk your dog. Jog. Stroll. You'll meet lots of people you can invite to church.
5. Your personal social media offers a great way to invite people. Post a photo, tell a story about how church impacts your life, link to the church website, or say "Join us Sunday at 11!" You never know who's reading.

*Let's All Pitch In!*

# CAMPUS CLEANUP

## SATURDAY WORK SESSIONS

MONTHLY FROM 9AM TO NOON  
LIGHT MAINTENANCE OF CHURCH GROUNDS  
AND INTERIOR OF BUILDINGS

Contact Jerry Crenshawy for more information.

**NEXT SESSION IS SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4**

# CALENDAR

([complete church calendar is here](#))

## Sunday, November 27

8:45 a.m., In-person Worship  
9:45 a.m., Pathfinders Class  
9:45 a.m., Benson Discussion Class  
9:45 a.m., Bright Siders Class  
9:45 a.m., Children's Sunday School  
9:45 a.m., Thrillseekers Class  
11:00 a.m., In-person Worship  
11:00 a.m., [Online Worship](#)  
12:00 p.m., Chancel Chimes Choir

## Monday, November 28

7:00 p.m., Church & Society

## Wednesday, November 30

5:45 p.m., Wonderful Wednesday  
Pot-luck Dinner  
6:45 p.m., Bible Study with  
Pastor Alan  
7:00 p.m., High School Bible Study

## Thursday, December 1

10:00 a.m., Thursday Bible Study  
5:00 p.m., Chancel Choir  
7:00 p.m., Outreach Committee

## Saturday, December 3

9:00 a.m., Campus Work Day  
1:00 p.m., Pathfinders Sunday  
School Christmas Party

## Sunday, December 4

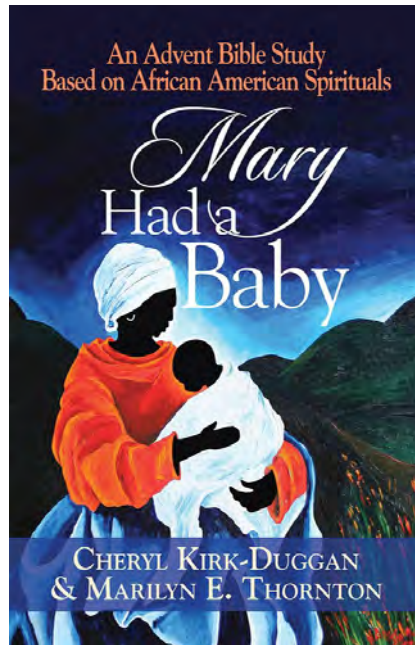
8:45 a.m., In-person Worship  
9:30 a.m., Coffee Fellowship  
9:45 a.m., Pathfinders Class  
9:45 a.m., Benson Discussion Class  
9:45 a.m., Bright Siders Class  
9:45 a.m., Children's Sunday School  
9:45 a.m., Thrillseekers Class  
11:00 a.m., In-person Worship  
11:00 a.m., [Online Worship](#)  
12:00 p.m., Chancel Chimes Choir  
12:00 p.m., Birthday Party for Jesus  
3:00 p.m., Prayer Shawl Group

## Tuesday, December 6

6:30 p.m., Women's Prison  
Ministry Gift Packaging

## Wednesday, December 7

7:00 a.m., Morning Coffee and  
Prayer (Zoom)



Upcoming Advent Study:

## MARY HAD A BABY

Wednesdays, November 30 through  
December 21, 6:45 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Join us on Wednesday nights during the Advent season for the study, *Mary Had a Baby*. This four-week study will help us welcome the birth of Jesus through themes found in the Bible and African American Spirituals. The study will be held on November 30 and December 7, 14, and 21 at 6:45 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We also welcome anyone to come by for dinner before the study beginning at 5:45 p.m. Bring your favorite dish and enjoy with everyone! Childcare is available by request.

## WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday evening women's bible study is over for this year, and now we would like to pose a question for the women: Would you be interested in a daytime women's bible study instead of an evening study? Please let us know what you prefer in the upcoming year by contacting Jo Balcome at 919-696-1037 or [sojobalcome@yahoo.com](mailto:sojobalcome@yahoo.com). See you in 2023!

## THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO ADVENT

The Pathfinders Sunday Class will be studying *The Light of the World: A Beginners Guide to Advent* by Amy Jill Levine. Several class members will facilitate a discussion each Sunday during Advent using the video for the study which is available through Amplify on the church website.



AMY-JILL LEVINE



LIGHT of  
the WORLD  
A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ADVENT

In *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent*, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the story Of the birth of Jesus...as she traces the Christmas narrative through the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit from the Magi. These stories open conversations around connections of the Gospel stories to the Old Testament, the role of women in first-century Jewish culture, the importance of Mary's visitation and the revolutionary implications of Mary's Magnificat, the census and the stable, and the star of Bethlehem and the flight to Egypt. **Everyone is invited! Contact [Becky Hill](#).**

