



It's Time to Get Ready!

by Pastor Alan Felton

The telephone rings. A friend you have not seen in a while wants to visit. You are excited and look forward to getting together. A date is set. It is time to get ready!

Advent is also a season for getting ready. We are preparing for the birth of Christ. Some of these preparations are easy to see. The Chrisom tree shines. Colorful poinsettias appear. The familiar notes of "Silent Night" are sung. All these traditions along with others that are dear to us are an important part of getting ready during Advent.

Other preparations are not so easy to see but just as important. Our sermonic theme during Advent this year is "The Gift of Christ." Jesus is a

gift from God, but Jesus also brings gifts along with himself. These gifts, the hallmarks of Advent, are hope, peace, joy, and love. We are invited to receive them each week of Advent as we await the glorious birth in Bethlehem.

Advent is more than simply a countdown to Christmas. It is an occasion to intentionally walk with God so we might grow in the Spirit as we journey toward the manger. Those gifts that Christ brings—hope, peace, joy, and love—are what we cultivate in our hearts so that we continually look more and more like Christ. I invite you to consider the following:

- How can I find hope and avoid being overwhelmed by anxiety during Advent?
- In what ways can I learn to be a peacemaker during these weeks of preparation?

- How can I find and express more joy even in my daily routine?
- In what ways can I share the love of Christ by showing compassion and kindness to others?

Advent is beginning. Jesus will soon arrive. It's time to get ready!

Worship Committee Chair Sought

We are looking for someone to chair our Worship Committee in 2024. This position coordinates the work of many sub-groups who faithfully do the various tasks involved in worship. The Worship Committee meets throughout the year to prepare for seasons such as Advent and Lent and to plan special days of worship. Prayerfully consider if chairing this committee might be something to which God is calling you. Contact [Pastor Alan](#) if you are interested in serving.





Last Call for Holiday Helpers!

Don't forget to bring your \$20 Target gift card for our Holiday Helpers ministry this Sunday, December 3! They will be delivered to Jeffreys Grove parents this week, so that they can shop for Christmas gifts for their children. Your Target gift card means not only a gift for a child who otherwise wouldn't be able to receive one, but also the gift of helping the parent go shopping to pick out that special gift.

Don't have time to go to Target this week but still want to help? You can bring \$20 on Sunday (or [pay online](#) with C4C in the memo), and we'll purchase the gift card for you.

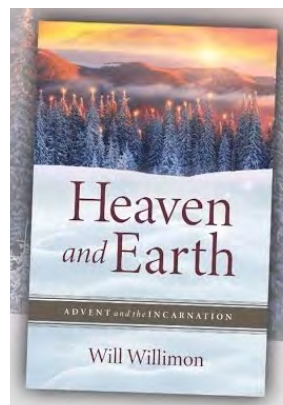
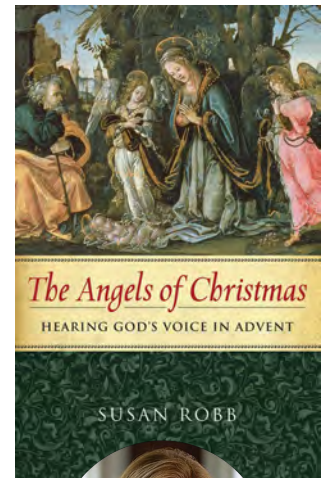
Contact [Cortney Babajtis](#) for more information.

Thank you!

The Angels of Christmas

by Susan Robb

For the Advent season, the Pathfinders Sunday School Class will be studying *The Angels of Christmas: Hearing God's Voice in Advent* by Susan Robb. This four-week study explores the four angelic visits surrounding the birth of Jesus with Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. We will explore the angelic visits and dive into the history of the angel Gabriel—and other angels—in the Old Testament. *The Angels of Christmas* uses these four Advent angelic appearances to discuss God's presence in history and our lives today. The messages of the angels hold meaning for listeners both then and now. **The Thrillseekers Class will be joining the Pathfinders in this study at 9:45 a.m. Sunday mornings.**



Heaven and Earth by Will Willimon

Watch out! God is on the way!

That's the urgently beautiful message of the new Advent study beginning Wednesday, November 29. Will Willimon's new study, titled "Heaven and Earth," takes us through the season of preparation for the coming of Christ by leading us through the Gospels each week. Through theological, spiritual, and practical perspectives, we will learn that Advent isn't just the countdown to Christmas but a season in which we all can learn to make a new start. Join us for this study that will give you a fresh perspective not only for the Christmas season but for your life on the Christian journey. **The "Heaven and Earth" study will be held on Wednesday evenings at 6:45 p.m. and on Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m.**



Cookies and Crafts with Santa

Friday, December 8, 2023 | 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. | Fellowship Hall

Join our preschool families and guests for an afternoon filled with fun! Every year, Santa visits us for cookies and photos with the children, and the kids spend time creating beautiful Christmas crafts to take home with them. This year, families can snap their own photos while spending quality time with Santa and having fun with friends.

Please sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/SantaCookiesAndCrafts> (choose one slot per family).

This event is free and open to our church family, preschool families, and guests. We hope you can join us!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Are you looking to find meaning in the midst of the busyness of Christmas? Do you want to find a gift that will last after the holiday has come and gone? Come to Benson Memorial UMC to worship God and welcome the Christ child. We are offering a number of services on Christmas Eve and you are invited! Come as you are and discover the joy of Christmas!

SERVICE TIMES

BLUE CHRISTMAS | DECEMBER 21

7:00 PM—Also known as the "Longest Night of the Year Service", this service offers respite to the hurting among us.

CHRISTMAS EVE | DECEMBER 24

10:00 AM—A worship service celebrating the last Sunday of Advent

4:00 PM—A Christmas Eve service geared especially for young children and families

7:00 and 11:00 PM—Christmas Eve services for the entire family complete with traditional hymns and candlelight



Pick up one of our Christmas invite cards in the narthex or in the office to give to a neighbor or friend. We welcome everyone!



Christmas Cheer Sunday

December 10, 2023

8:45 and 11:00 AM services in the sanctuary,
PLUS noon | Fellowship Hall

In the famous words of Buddy the Elf, “The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear.” Join the Benson Memorial Family on Christmas Cheer Sunday for a joyful day of celebration!

On Sunday morning, December 10, at both our 8:45 and 11:00 a.m. worship services, special musical guest **Anita Burroughs-Price** will perform beautiful Christmas music on her harp. In addition to Anita’s solo pieces, she and Anthony will play a harp and organ duet, “Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers.” Anita is the principal harpist with the North Carolina Symphony, and has music degrees from both Yale University and London’s Royal College of Music. She is a delight to listen to, and you won’t want to miss this opportunity to enjoy her playing!

Then, following the 11:00 a.m. service, stay for fellowship and our **Christmas Cheer party featuring a cookie exchange** and, of course, your favorite Christmas music that we can sing loud for all to hear. Bring two to three dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies to share, and take home an assortment of delicious cookies to enjoy all week (if they last that long)! Tea, lemonade and coffee will be served, and additional cookies will be provided for enjoyment.

Also, please bring an ornament to add to the Fellowship Hall Christmas tree, if you are able.

Merry Christmas!



Church Calendar

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

Sunday, December 3

8:45 a.m., Worship Service
9:45 a.m., Sunday School Classes
11:00 a.m., Worship Service
11:00 a.m., [Online Worship](#)
12:00 p.m., Chancel Chimes
3:00 p.m., Prayer Shawl Ministry

Wednesday, December 6

7:00 a.m., Coffee and Prayer
5:45 p.m., Wonderful Wednesday
Dinner and Fellowship
6:45 p.m., Bible Study
7:00 p.m., High School Bible Study

Thursday, December 7

10:00 a.m., Thursday Morning
Bible Study
5:00 p.m., Chancel Choir

Friday, December 8

1:00 p.m., Cookies with Santa
Preschool Party

Sunday, December 10

“Christmas Cheer” Sunday

8:45 a.m., Worship Service
9:45 a.m., Sunday School Classes
11:00 a.m., Worship Service
11:00 a.m., [Online Worship](#)
12:00 p.m., Chancel Chimes
12:15 p.m., Churchwide Christmas
Party & Cookie Exchange

Monday, December 11

7:00 p.m., Church & Society

Tuesday, December 12

5:00 p.m., Women’s Prison
Fellowship Team Prison Visit

Wednesday, December 13

5:45 p.m., Wonderful Wednesday
Dinner and Fellowship
6:45 p.m., Bible Study
7:00 p.m., High School Bible Study

Thursday, December 14

10:00 a.m., Thursday Morning
Bible Study
11:30 a.m., Adult Fellowship
5:00 p.m., Chancel Choir