



Hilltop Highlights

December/January 2021



Lynn Miller Jackson
Pastor
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hilltopumchurch.org

Waiting Room: Reflection, Renewal, and Revelation

God engaged the unexpected to begin resetting the world through the birth of Christ. Where the ways of human beings had crowded out possibilities in the minds and hearts of multitudes, God broke into the world to make new space through the least expected. Through a teenaged, virgin mother, a tiny, vulnerable baby named Jesus would be the Light of the world. He would set a new tone for the world, challenge systems and powers, reveal the ways of God, embody and share the love of God. He will come again. Until Christ's return, it is our turn to be God's reset agents. It's our turn to continue Christ's work, to intentionally make new space for the possibilities of God to come.

The season of Advent marks the beginning of the liturgical Christian year. Advent derives from the Latin word 'adventus', which means "coming." The season proclaims the coming of Christ—whose birth we prepare to celebrate once more, who comes continually in Word and Spirit, and whose return in final victory we anticipate. Each year, Advent calls the community of faith to prepare for these comings. Historically, the season was marked by fasts making spiritual, physical, emotional, and theological space. The Advent season opens an active waiting room to allow followers of Christ to reset their hearts, minds, and souls in preparation and anticipation of the One who is to come. This is a time for reflection on what we have done and/or left undone; a time for renewal as we think toward possibilities; and a time for revelation as we make space for divine epiphany.

Advent is about what is coming, not what has been. Jesus was and is always moving forward; not abolishing but fulfilling God's plan. Observing the Christian liturgical seasons is a practical means of anchoring in Christ and drawing nearer to God to reset ourselves in order to help reset the world. As we lean into this sacred Advent Season, and the Seasons of Christmas and Epiphany to follow, I pray that you will honor this time of reflection, renewal, and revelation by being fully present with God. Make waiting room with God to explore and expand your capacities for God's plans and purposes for your life. Make room for the epiphany of possibilities to come.

In light of all the distractions in the world, I offer this anchoring prayer, "A Prayer for Being Grounded/Present" by Karen Hernandez from *Speaking Truth: Women Rais-*

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PASTOR'S MUSINGS

(Continued from page 1)

ing Their Voices In Prayer (p. 60).

"God of silence and cacophony, of perpetual motion and stillness,

Of chaos—the holy and the unholy kinds alike,

Of time—then, now, and not yet, help me to be where I am.

By the power of your presence,

Help me be fully alive and present in this moment,

With body, mind, and spirit unified

Rather than trying to go in many different directions,

As I am prone to do. Help me be where I am.

When I am overwhelmed by the too-muchness of life,

Ground me in this moment; this place, this body.

As I seek to still myself, to lean into your presence, I breathe deeply.

As I inhale, I invite you in, God. Fill the worried regions of my mind.

Renew the exhausted areas of my heart.

Invigorate my body for action, for love.

Before I exhale, God, I cling to you.

Rather than entering for just a breath, dwell within me.

Linger so long that I begin to recognize a spaciousness within me

And the truth that I have ample room for you.

Occupy the corners of my spirit that were empty

Until I welcome you home into me again. As I exhale, I follow you, God.

It's not that you are departing from me,

But rather that you are leading the way to the next moment,

The next breath, the next age,

The next way you have prepared me to be used for building your kin-dom.

Before I inhale again, God, I surrender to you.

I recognize myself as depleted without you.

I long to follow you that I might be filled by you again.

God, you are the breath that carries me forward.

Let my every breath be a prayer.

Holy One, help me to always be where I AM. Amen"

May we all be fully present and listening for God's messengers/messages and respond as Mary did, "Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." It's our turn to be God's reset agents. For what and Who is to come, to God be the glory!

THIS & THAT

From UMW

A big thanks to everyone that donated diapers and underwear to the October UMW diaper drive. We had an overwhelming response and are very grateful. With your help we collected: 3236 diapers, 868 wipes, 320 pairs of socks, and 336 pairs of underwear. Everything was donated to the Crossroads Urban Center for distribution.

Weekly E-Notes

Are you receiving e-mails from the church office every week? These are brief notes on what is happening at Hilltop in the next week. They are usually sent on Thursday and include Sunday's scripture readings and a link to the latest newsletter.

If you're not getting them, please send an e-mail to office@hilltopumchurch.org and ask to be added to the distribution list.

Office Hours

Office hours have resumed mostly to normal: **Monday through Thursday 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and Fridays 9:00 am to noon.** The doors will remain locked, but you can ring the bell to be let in. Leigh Anne no longer has the church phone forwarded to her cell, so if you need her outside of office hours, call her at 801-953-3450, but only for emergencies. Thank you.

December Birthdays

Lillian Dumas	Dec 2
Desy Mason	Dec 6
Maria Montoya.....	Dec 6
Tammy Iriondo	Dec 13
Cheryl Gentle	Dec 16
Deb Hale	Dec 18
Roy Goodart	Dec 24
Tracy Owen	Dec 24
Mark Jackson.....	Dec 26
Lola Thombs.....	Dec 26
David Fleming.....	Dec 28
Curtis Crichon.....	Dec 29
Martha Heiskell.....	Dec 30



January Birthdays

Solenn Coquemont	Jan 1
Taylor Hintze.....	Jan 3
Jackie Morley	Jan 3
Mike Kovach.....	Jan 4
Andrew Smith.....	Jan 5
Jen Bordner	Jan 8
Daniel Kovach	Jan 12
Philip Montoya.....	Jan 18
Kathleen Ballaine	Jan 19

MOTHER'S MORNING OUT

Lifelong Journey in God's Light



Becky Elliston
MMO Director
mmo@
hilltopumchurch.org

Living our life in God's light is a way to distinguish ourselves as people of God. Living in this manner enables us to bless those around us, as well as opening ourselves to the blessings God has for us. We have all heard that we are blessed to be a blessing.

I was not raised in a church-going family. I can't help but wonder how different my life would have been if I had the foundation of Christ's love giving me strength. Thankfully, God's grace has seen me through, even when I wasn't aware of the gift I was receiving. Now that I am a member of Hilltop, I constantly see people who live in God's light and put it to action. I have heard how I should surround myself with the people I want to be like. I can take that even further to say: "Surround yourself with the dreamers and the doers, the believers and thinkers, but most of all, surround yourself with those who see greatness within you, even when you don't see it yourself."* That is the person I would like to be!

Working with the children in the Mother's Morning Out program gives me the unique opportunity to model this way of living. I can shine God's light to all the students in attendance. Knowing what a difference it would have made for me as a child, I am ever so grateful that I can let these children know that I see greatness in them. Children learn by example

and mimic the behaviors they witness. I fully understand the impact I can make everyday simply by living in God's light. Hopefully, I can support their lifelong journey with Christ while they are so young that they will not know any other way to live.

This reminds me of the congregation's response to the profession of faith:

"With God's help, we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround *these persons* with a community of love and forgiveness, that *they* may grow in *their* service to others.

We will pray for *them*, that *they* may be true *disciples*. Who *walk* in the way that leads to life.

I have spoken that in unison with all of you many times. And I am so blessed to be a part of a church family that supports each other's journey in God's light.*

—Danica McKellar

ADVENT

Waiting, Listening, and Contemplating

By Jane Roxbury

Waiting for the coming—that’s advent. Waiting for our God to send his son to teach us, to help us, to save us. While we’ve kept our distance and washed our hands and taken life at a different pace, have we learned anything? As we wait for Jesus, as we wait for the end to the pandemic, as we wait for life to return to “normal,” I wonder, what will we carry forward?

Will we remember these things . . .

There is enough for everyone. Our God is huge. He created a world where there is enough. Giving human rights to everyone does not take away rights from ourselves. Feeding the hungry does not cause us to go hungry. Share the loaves and the fishes. There will be enough.

What we do can affect people on the other side of the world, people we don’t even know. The pandemic has made it clear that

we are interdependent. We can spread or stop the spread. Each one of us. Concern for others causes us to wear our masks and wash our hands, and think deeply enough to see that we are all in this together, all of humanity. You are your brother’s keeper.

Human life is fragile. Our planet is fragile. We need to take care of everyone on this Earth. Everyone matters. No one person is more deserving than any other. Feed my lambs.

In this time of waiting, I pray that we will listen, love, grow in God’s grace. I pray that all people will emerge with a greater understanding of the fragility of life, a greater feeling for the interdependence of humanity, and greater respect for the planet that sustains us.

During this Advent of 2020, let us wait quietly and contemplate the teachings of the Christ.

Options for Giving

- Text the amount to 833-575-0423. A link will come up and walk you through the process,
- Download Give+ Mobile on your smart phone,
- Go to hilltopumchurch.org and click on “donate”
- Click on the “Enroll for Auto Pay” button on the home page of our website where you can set up recurring payments,
- Mail your check to

Hilltop UMC
985 E 10600 S
Sandy, UT 84094



MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRY

Being Present, When We Can't Be Present

By David Fleming, M&A Chair

What a year 2020 has been! It has been a year of untold suffering, anxiety, conflict and upheaval making it difficult to focus on the positive, but in the midst of all the bad there has been so much good. As a congregation we have pivoted and necessity has been the "mother of invention". While seeming to have totally ruled our lives for the past nine months, the pandemic has also forced us out of our comfort zones and we have found new ways to stay connected. We as a congregation have been forced to focus on what is possible in the face of what is impossible.

As we enter into the blessed season of Advent, we have already laid the foundation for a new beginning and we are reaching people beyond our local community. We have made it possible for those who can't be present in the traditional sense, to be present in the virtual sense. Through live streaming on Sunday mornings, we have maintained a healthy worship attendance, but we have made that opportunity available beyond Sunday morning to so many. It was noted in our Church Council meeting this past Wednesday evening that views of our recorded Sunday morning services have been regularly exceeding 400 views during the week following the service! Think about that... in my 16 years at Hilltop the only times we have even come close to that kind of worship participation has been at Christmas and Easter with average attendance on Sunday peaking at

around 250 people. Now it appears that we are reaching over 400 people every week and there is nowhere to go from here, but up.

Now as we prepare the way for the coming of Christ in this season of Advent and reflect on what has been a year like none other in our memories, we find that we still cannot gather and celebrate in traditional ways. There will be no 16th annual Community Christmas Celebration with our friends from the Crescent Ridge Stake and there will only be one virtual Christmas Eve service and we do not know when we will be able to again gather in person. I suggest we use this traditional time of reflection and waiting to rediscover the spirit of Christmas and remember that God is always with us. Let us ponder the possibilities that we have already begun to see in this time of quarantine. Take advantage of virtual meeting technology to reconnect with those who have been important to us on our life journeys, but who are not part of our current day-to-day lives. Reach out to those we have not heard from or those who may be limited in their ability to avail themselves of virtual technology (phones still allow us to talk to each other). In short, use the unique opportunity gifted to us by quarantine to slow down and see the opportunities we have been missing - to see the possibilities that we did not see before. Be present when you can't be present.

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Roberta Shimensky
Music Director
801.571-5777

MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRY

"Joy to the World" - an Advent Journey for the Whole

Families of children ages 3-12 are warmly invited to participate in a special Advent faith-formation opportunity. "Joy to the World" is a four-part resource which helps families prepare their hearts and homes for the Christ child. Engaging activities explore Advent themes and create lasting family memories.

This resource is flexible, and families can choose or complete activities on their own schedule. Each week includes a carol singalong video with Ms. Katie, a fun Advent rhythm beat, an Advent candle expe-

rience in your home, a nature activity, a holiday craft, and daily conversation prompts. Materials will be packed in a basket and delivered to your home on the first Sunday of Advent.

Spend this Advent season connecting, talking, singing, and creating with your family. Baskets make great gifts for grandchildren and neighbor kids, too! To reserve a "Joy to the World" basket (which includes enough materials for the whole family), register here. Suggested donation of \$20 per basket.

Chancel Choir 5 Year Club

Several years ago, a tradition was started in Chancel Choir that we call the "5-Year Club." Each singer that has been in the choir for five years is awarded a special folder that is embossed with the Hilltop logo and personalized with the singer's name. Our newest members of the "5-Year Club" are Rich and Pam Dropek (Pam not pictured because she is back East helping with family during the pandemic). Our "5-Year Club" is now up to 13 members!



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The pandemic has been stressful and has forever altered the future, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. The light at the end of this tunnel is unusually bright and it is beginning to come into focus! Now

more than ever, it is important to remember that light is *The Light* of Christ Our Savior.

Prepare the way and may you enjoy a blessed season of joy, peace and love.

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

Children's Books for Discussion of Race and Inequality at Home

by Karen Moser

Have you ever tried fry bread? Recipes vary from place to place, tribe to tribe, and family to family. Fry bread can be served with sweet or savory toppings. It is not an everyday food, but is typically reserved for special occasions. The first time I encountered fry bread, I was spending the summer in Ashland, MT. Ashland is located near the Northern Cheyenne reservation in southeastern Montana. As I participated in community events during that summer, it was so fun to learn about everyone's favorite fry bread preparations and to sample this local culinary tradition. As I have learned more, I now realize that the history of fry bread is complex and related to the adaptation of Native American culture in the face of colonialism. Nevertheless, fry bread remains an important part of many Native American food traditions. When I learned that there was a whole book about fry bread, of course I had to check it out! (This book is on several current kids' reading lists, including NPR's recent list of 100 Favorite Books for Young Readers- <https://www.npr.org/2020/08/31/905804301/welcome-to-story-hour-100-favorite-books-for-young-readers>)

This Month's Book: Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story by Kevin Noble Maillard, pictures by Juana Martinez-Neal

Available in the Salt Lake County and Salt Lake City Library system

Summary: Kevin Maillard is a journalist and professor originally from Oklahoma. He belongs to the Seminole Nation and has fond childhood memories of his Aunts preparing fry bread for family celebrations. Fry Bread (the book) honors the important role of fry bread in Native American culture and shows scenes from everyday life in a modern, multigenerational Native American family. Tender illustrations show the family cooking, playing, sharing, and reflecting on their heritage. A lengthy author's note at the conclusion of the story provides additional historical information and context for the story.

What Do The Kids Think?

Heidi- "I like the illustrations and the way the people are drawn."

Clark- "I like that there is a recipe so we can make our own fry bread."

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What is an important food tradition in your family? How do special foods help you celebrate holidays and other special days in the life of your family?
2. How do foods help us all tell the story of our family's (or neighborhood's, tribe's, community's, church's, nation's) history?

If you have recommendations for books to feature in future months, please e-mail me at moserka@gmail.com.

Happy Reading!

A CHANCE TO GROW !

Oswald Chamber, from *My Utmost for His Highest*; writes- "individuality must go in order that the personal life may come out and be brought into fellowship with God. God wants to bring you into union with himself, but unless you are willing to give up your right to deny yourself, he cannot". It feels like in this Christmas Advent Season, we are giving up a lot; we are being challenged to celebrate Christmas with our friends and families in new and different ways because of Covid 19. The journey that we are on right now challenges us and yet gives us a chance to grow in many ways we may have never thought possible. We may not know exactly how and where our ministry at Hilltop will unfold, but God will continue to bless us with those opportunities to serve with our time, talents, and treasure. We also know that God will be with us. Pray slowly and thoughtful Psalm 131.

Our Staff Parish Relations team of Pastor Lynn, Jo Brace, Matt Pettibone, Susan Kovach, Emma Robison, Caitlin Collins, Tiffany Moser, & Andrew Smith; as well as by position, those who serve with us- Susan Dunlap, Lay Leader and JoAnne Jirsa-Myers, Lay Member to Annual Conference will be praying and discerning how to care and support our pastor and staff at Hilltop UMC.

We offer up these three prayers for you as they are needed:

MORNIG PRAYER FOR WALKING HUMBLY WITH GOD

Christ as Light, Guide us to the work you would do in us and through us and will

do in spite of us.
You are I am who I am.
Teach us to be who we are
Christ as shield.
Christ beside us on our left and on our right.
Hold us to your path.
Protect us from ourselves and from the powers of evil we encounter.
Help us to live this day as instruments of your love. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR ANXIETY

Calm me, O Lord, as you stilled the storm.
Still me O Lord, keep me from harm.
Let all the tumult within me cease.
Enfold me Lord, in your peace.
Thou Lord and God of Power. Shield and sustain me this__(Moment, Meeting, Project, Encounter,...)

EVENING PRAYER FOR WALKING HUMBLY WITH GOD

God(Mother, Father, Holy Spirit, Holy Trinity, Holy One and Holy Three, Shepherd, Potter, Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, Giver of Sacred Worth, _____)
Bless the work that is done and the work that is to be.
Bless the church that we are and the church that we are to become.
Continue to work in us, through us, and in spite of us.
So that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Amen and Mat It Be So.

*Your servant leader,
Bob Scarborough
Staff Parish Relations Ministry Team,
2021 Chairperson*



MISSIONS

By Cheryl Gentle

Have you ever written a personal mission statement? Not one for church or work, but for yourself. I was thinking about this when I read the mission statement for our committee. It says our purpose is for "transformation, redemption, justice and Grace" as we connect to others in our world. Could we please have a giant helping of all four right now, God? We want to hit the reset button, but that doesn't mean going back, but moving forward. Our calendar says December is the end of the year, and are we ever ready for that to be true! But the Christian year is just beginning and it is such a special season. We want, need to be transformed into kinder, more loving and understanding people of faith. We want redemption for past mistakes and sins, not just for ourselves but for others. We want to cultivate forgiveness and unity in our country. We hope and pray for justice instead of revenge. We know this is all possible through the grace of God, but how do we get from here to there?

It is a fact that reaching out to help others in need, does as much for us as for them. This is the time of year when we see examples all around us. Last month's newsletter highlighted the cleaning bucket donations to UMCOR and the Share Your Bounty food drives to Crossroads and the Rescue

Mission. We will continue a winter clothing and food drive on December 5th, with a drive-by drop-off at Hilltop House. Although the UMCOR West Depot is closing, the national organization will continue to need our support. The Red Cross will be holding their next blood drive at Hilltop on Friday December 11th. No walk-ins will be allowed but if you can donate the gift of life, contact the Red Cross or Mike Hintze. Family Promise is undergoing a major makeover but progress is being made for 2021. Look for updates in the near future.

Even when we are not physically "present" at Hilltop, there is much we can do. PRAY for those less fortunate, not just for our friends and family. Pray for our church, our country, our world. GIVE financially whenever possible. The Christmas Eve offering benefits Missions and a year end donation marked "Missions" will be gratefully appreciated. Make it your "mission" to call at least one or two people a week and tell them you miss them. We are waiting for so many things right now; some to be over and more to begin. May we all find our mission, our calling, our gifts.

"The greatest gift was never placed beneath a tree, but lay within a manger for all to see."

ADVENT ACTIVITIES

Blue Christmas

Why a Blue Christmas Service?

Blue to reflect a blue mood. There are many among us who are not in a cheerful place as Christmas Season approaches. Particularly in this pandemic, many are living with loss and struggling with darkness and different kinds of grief. The Blue Christmas service is contemplative and hospitable. It accepts our personal realities and affirms that it is okay not to be okay. It makes space for expressions of lament while offering an opportunity to focus on healing and the promise of hope.

To help with this service, please share with Pastor Lynn what you are lamenting. Whether it's constant change, confusing information, limited mobility/travel or access, loss of loved ones, jobs, etc. We will lift the laments as part of the worship time. No names will be used. **Please email Pastor Lynn** | pastor@hilltopumchurch.org.

Join us for the Blue Christmas Service on Dec 16th | 6:30pm via Facebook Live or www.hilltopumchurch.org.

Christmas Eve

At 6:30 there will be a virtual Christmas Pageant. The live Christmas Eve service will be at 8:30 pm. We will live stream our Christmas Eve service, and we will tell other congregations to join us via zoom for a the singing of "Silent Night."

Blood Drive

The American Red Cross has a constant and ongoing need for blood and platelet donations. There is no known end date in this fight against coronavirus, and the Red Cross needs the help of blood and platelet donors to meet the needs of patients. Please schedule your appointment now for Friday, December 11th from 1:00 - 5:00pm in Fellowship Hall. You can sign up to donate at redcrossblood.org. If you need assistance signing up, or have questions, please reach out to Tracy Hintze at 801.518.8767.



THE TIME TO
GIVE BLOOD
IS NOW

Order Poinsettias

Help the Worship Committee provide a beautiful flower-filled sanctuary for Christmas. Honor or memorialize your loved ones who will be listed in the December 24 slides.

Cost is \$12 per plant (payment is to accompany your order). You can send an e-mail to office@hilltopumchurch.org with your order and pay online (www.hilltopumchurch.org). The worship committee will purchase at least 20. Any monies collected above the cost will be donated to missions outside Hilltop. The order deadline is Sunday, December 13.

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Sandy, Utah 84094



Hilltop *Highlights*

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office@hilltopumchurch.org
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Sunday Schedule

Sunday School for All	9:00 am
Worship	9:00 am
Fellowship Time	10:00 am
Worship	10:30 am
Fellowship Time	11:30 am

Pastor Lynn Miller Jackson
Email: pastor@hilltopumchurch.org