



Hilltop *Highlights*

December 2021/
January 2022



Rev. Lynn Miller Jackson
Pastor
pastor@
hilltopumchurch.org

Unboxing the Real Gifts of Christmas The Advent of Our Transformation.

As you read this, we have entered Advent Season which encompasses the four weeks prior to Christmas Eve (Dec 24th). Christmas Day marks the *beginning* of Christmas Season which continues to Epiphany (Jan 6). We can truly celebrate and relish the Christmas Season after earnestly preparing through Advent.

The Advent Season is a time of spiritual preparation to refocus our hearts and minds to the meaning and anniversary of the birth of Christ and the next coming of Christ. The origin of "advent" is from the Latin word *adventus* which simply translates "coming" or "arrival", particularly of something or someone significant.

During this Advent Season, we are releasing the confines or common notions of Christmas.

We will unbox Christmas looking deeper into the meaning of gifts that preceded the gift of Christ and the meaning for our lives. The preparation for welcoming Christ is preparation for our transformation when we embrace the fullness of God with us.

God sent Jesus into the world to begin a transformation to bring forth the intended family of God and the flourishing of all creation. That transformation is ongoing with traction and slippage. In all seasons, God is active. Part of our preparation is noticing how God is active with us and within us. How will we unbox our limiting conceptions to fully receive the transformation within ourselves and in the world that is underway and yet to come?

In this and the coming seasons, let us wholeheartedly attune to God's presence and counsel to make this the advent of our transformation. After the celebration of Christmas, may we more earnestly join Christ in the work of Christmas. In the words of Howard Thurman:

The Work of Christmas

The Work of Christmas begins
When the song of the angels is stilled,

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PASTOR'S MUSINGS

When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their
flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

There is a fulfilling, richness in the work of Christmas that honors the gift and model of Christ. May 2022 be a year of unboxed, overflowing transformation within and through us in the name of Christ for the sake of the world. To God be the glory!



**Thursdays at 7:30 am via Zoom
And Facebook Live**

Please join Pastor Lynn and occasional guests for prayer and pondering devotional time. Please share what topics are on your heart for a future chat with the pastor.

Meeting ID: 882-6256-887
Passcode: Pastor
Call: 1-346-248-7799
Passcode: 050454

To join through Facebook, go to <https://www.facebook.com/lynn.w.millerjackson>

December Birthdays

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



January Birthdays

Solenn Coquemont Jan 1
Jackie Morley Jan 3
Mike Kovach Jan 4
Andrew Smith Jan 5
Jenn Bordner Jan 8
Philip Montoya Jan 18
Kathleen Ballaine Jan 19
Maggi Welliver Jan 23
Cass Clark Jan 25
Trey Jordan Jan 25
Tyler Jordan Jan 25

MISSIONS

By Cheryl Gentle

Advent is here and we are preparing for the coming of Christ. What an exciting time to reach out to our neighbors. It is a time to share our blessings with those who are less fortunate. We do this not because we can, or because we are supposed to, but because we are called to be the hands and feet of Christ. Advent is the best time of the year to share hope, peace, joy, and love with those around us.

Have you ever **hoped** for a place to call home? That is what Family Promise provides for families who are temporarily homeless. This past week, five members of a family moved into Hilltop House under a new model (for us) of transitional housing. They were welcomed by Doug Orr and Kevin Day and will be staying with us for six months. They are from Venezuela and have been on a long difficult journey to arrive in Utah. We **hope** they will join us in worship so please welcome them.

How would it feel to be out in the cold without a warm coat, hat and gloves? Saturday, December 4th from 10am- 1pm you have an opportunity to bring these items and more to benefit the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake. Mission team members will be in front of Hilltop House to accept your donations. Complete details are in the weekly Happenings. This will bring you a sense of **peace** that you cleaned out that closet! Picture a look of gratitude and **peace** for someone who is now warm.

On Sunday, December 5th, we Share our Bounty by bringing non-perishable food items to church. You may have extra canned goods from Thanksgiving or found a good case-lot sale. A very large donation of frozen food from a member moving out of town was a welcome



bonus at the November Bounty. Sharing with the Rescue Mission and Crossroads Urban Center brings **joy** to our hearts and provides for those suffering from food insecurity.

On November 2nd, members of the Mission team and the congregation were able to assemble and distribute food bags to students at the East Midvale Elementary School. This is a new partnership with the Utah Food Bank which Hilltop responded to immediately. The Mobile Food Pantry reaches 62 schools each month. The slots are filled for December but volunteers are needed for January through May, on the first Tuesday from 1:30p-3:30p. Please call the church office and you will then be contacted with details by Elizabeth Mitchell. This is truly a **love** offering and what better expression during Advent.

Advent is here! Christ is coming! Let us prepare by serving with **Hope, Peace, Joy and Love**.

ADVENT AND BEYOND

Blood Drive

Friday, December 10th 1:00-5:00 pm in Fellowship Hall. Sign up at redcrossblood.org

A Chancel Choir Christmas

Sing a Gift of Peace

Sunday, December 19th at 6:00 pm in the Sanctuary.



Blue Christmas

Tuesday, December 21 at 7:30 pm in the Sanctuary. A service for those who feel less than joyous during the season.

Christmas Eve Worship

One service at 8:30 pm



Drive-Thru Outerwear and Underwear Drive

December 4 from 10:00 am-1:00 pm

The Missions Committee is hosting a collection of winter coats, scarves, gloves, hats and men's underwear to be distributed to the Salt Lake Rescue Mission. Saturday, December 4 from 10:00 am-1:00 pm. Volunteers stationed by Hilltop House will collect your donations. Men's items are needed most and outerwear can be gently used or new. Men's underwear must be NEW and sizes L and XL are requested most. The Rescue Mission has an abundance of socks this year-so socks are not needed. Your donations will be greatly appreciated in keeping the homeless warm this winter. You may also bring items on Sunday, December 5 before worship.

January Share Your Bounty

Sunday, January 2

Bring non-perishable food items to the narthex to share with Crossroads Urban Center and the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake.

New Year Hope

What are your hopes for the new year? How will you bring hope, peace, joy, and love to the world?

360 Readiness Survey

See Hilltop Happenings e-mail on Wednesdays for updates

NEW THINGS

Mobile Food Pantry

January 4 1:30-3:30 pm

The Mobile Food Pantry outreach got off to an outstanding start! Thank you to everyone who has volunteered. We have filled December, but will need folks for January - May. The outreach takes place the first Tuesday of the month from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

We're assembling and distributing food bags for families at East Midvale Elementary School. When we assisted in November, we learned that some of the children who attend the school live in the nearby Family Shelter or are refugees, in addition to other neighborhood families whose resources can't cover the food they need. This Utah Food Bank program reaches 62 schools in the State once a month. We're the labor on site that makes it all happen at East Midvale Elementary.

The program builds a better future for the kids and our community long-term. Children who get the nourishment they need do better in school, have less stress, and less illness. Thank you very much for responding to this opportunity to help.

To volunteer for January or any future month through May, contact Elizabeth Mitchell, who is organizing this outreach.

Coffee and Conversation

Coming in January

By Susan Dunlap, Lay Leader

Each week at the beginning of worship, the Liturgist says these words in our Welcome:

"Hilltop is an inclusive faith community of hospitality, healing, help and hope bringing hearts to Christ"

We listen to these words but what does this mean: "inclusive faith community"? How do we define inclusiveness? How do we as a congregation put that into action and be intentional in our inclusiveness? We have a saying here at Hilltop that "all means all." But does this include all language, cultural, sexual orientation and race differences?



If you have driven by recently, I hope you have seen our new banner out on the front lawn "Love Lives Here." We have a couple of others in the works so that we can rotate our message. If designing these is something you would be interested in, please email Teresa Rivera at rivera.slc@comcast.net.

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NEW THINGS

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We will hold Coffee and Conversation small groups after the Sunday worship service and also schedule conversations via Zoom. Our goal is to do the work to share, define and identify how we show our inclusiveness, and the barriers we may have individually or collectively erected that hamper an inclusive environment. Our goal is to work together in a covenant relationship, one in which we can respectfully and with love openly discuss potentially divisive topics and share our differences as well as points of commonality. All voices and points of view are encouraged and welcomed as we begin this journey together. If interested, you are also invited to join our recently formed Inclusion Committee, for more info contact Gygi Olsen at 801-652-4293.



Meeting Schedule

Sunday, December 12 at 11:30 am

Tuesday, December 14 at 7:00 via Zoom

Sunday, January 9 at 11:30 am

Tuesday, January 11 at 7:00 pm via Zoom

Sunday, January 23 at 11:30 pm

Tuesday, January 25 at 7:00 pm

Worship

By Jane Roxbury, Worship Chair

You may have noticed something new in our worship space the last two times you've attended worship or watched on live streaming. The Worship Committee is pleased to announce that its Liturgical Art sub-group has been working hard to coordinate visuals with Pastor Lynn's sermons. We are creating the advent story in silhouettes on the wall behind the choir. Something new will be hung up each week in advent. We hope that our art adds interest and another way of communicating Christ's story. Many thanks to all the people who have helped in this endeavor.

Advent 1

Stars represent the cloud of witnesses; Abraham's descendants, the genealogy of Christ.

Advent 2

Angels announce the coming of Christ.

Advent 3

Joyful women Mary and Elizabeth celebrate the joy of the presence of the Lord in community.

Advent 4

Innkeeper and Inn represent sharing Christmas love by doing what you can. There may have been no room at the inn, but the innkeeper offered them space in the stable.

(If you'd like to contribute to our Easter project, contact Jane at roxbury.jane@gmail.com).

GIVE THE GIFT OF **CONNECTION**

Fostering healing through the holidays.

"The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive."

- Dr. Bruce D. Perry

"HOME" FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Often, kids come into a foster home feeling out of place and lonely, especially during the holidays. Creating new memories as a family can help children begin to feel safe and heal from trauma they've experienced. Studies show strong evidence that connection fosters healing.

How to give...

ONLINE DONATION

GIVEBUTTER.COM/FOSTERINGCONNECTION

Text FOSTERINGCONNECTION to (202) 858-1233

GIFT CARDS, TICKETS, OR MEMBERSHIPS

- Amazon Wishlist
- Amazon, Walmart, Target
- Family membership or tickets to museum, aquarium, fun center, theatre, amusement park, or your family's favorite restaurant.

CONNECTION KIT

Family tradition, experience, movie night, game night, etc.

- Family friendly
- No gift wrap
- Items assembled in bag or basket ready to gift to a family.

****Mailed or Delivered by Monday, Dec. 20th
5296 S. Commerce Dr. #400 Murray UT 84107 (closed weekends)**



utahfostercare.org

5296 S. Commerce Dr. #400 Murray, UT 84020

@utahfostercare



50 x 11.00 in

MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRY

Creativity and Thinking Outside the Box

By David Fleming, M&A Chair

Last year at this time I wrote, "2020 has been a year like no other."

Well, 2021 has been *another* year like no other. We have begun to gather cautiously but we remain in the grips of a world-wide pandemic. The pandemic has forced us to visualize a "new normal" and to live "outside the box" when, truth be told... we'd rather not; thank you very much! But at the same time, and as I also wrote last year, we "...have been forced to focus on *what is possible* in the face of what is impossible." In short, the pandemic *forced* us out of our boxes. Although we were made to feel uncomfortable, we learned that we could do new and great things and confirmed what we already knew: God is with us.

Eleanor Roosevelt is famously said, "What could we accomplish if we knew we could not fail?" When we step out in faith, we know we cannot fail because God is with us. That is exactly what we have done and must continue to do. As a congregation, we've got this! It's in our DNA and we have been creatively finding ways to reach our quarantined brothers and sisters since

the beginning of the pandemic, but that is not a new trait forced on us by the pandemic. We just shifted our "normal" into overdrive and found a new path. We struggled and stumbled, but God walked with us and we did not fail.

The Music & Arts Ministry is a great example of how our creativity and teamwork has helped us to expand and find new outreach opportunities, but we are not alone. All of our teams know how to be creative and get out of the box. In that spirit, let's prepare the way for the coming of Christ in this season of Advent and boldly continue the work of Christmas throughout 2022. We are called to do God's work, to transform the world and make disciples. We can step out of the box with confidence, because we cannot fail. We have the creativity and experience, but more importantly, God is with us.

Please plan to attend "A Chancel Choir Christmas" on Sunday, December 19th at 6:00 pm either in-person or virtually and invite you family and friends, near and far to join us! We are so looking forward to bringing this awesome event to as many as possible.

May you enjoy a blessed season of joy, peace and love and may you be inspired to use the gifts God has given you to get out of the box and carry Christ's love to every corner of the world!



David Fleming
Chair, Music & Arts
Ministry

MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRY

A Chancel Choir Christmas 2021

Sunday, December 19, at 6:00 p.m. the sanctuary transforms into a magical, mystical, musical experience of Emmanuel – *God with us*. The Creator God's greatest creation is the moment he chose to enter the world as the man Jesus. This is the moment in time that salvation was created.

How wonderful to leave the business of worldly Christmas behind and gather to share the season of Advent with the Chancel Choir, narrator, Hallelujah Bells, brass quartet, harp, and more! It will be a great blessing to all – please join us.



A Chancel Choir Christmas 2021
Sing Gift of Peace
Sunday, December 19, 2021
6:00 p.m.
featuring Hilltop Chancel Choir, Roberta Shimensky, Director
Hilltop Brass • Hallelujah Bells • Young Adult Choir • Instrumentalists
Free and Open to the Public

Hilltop
An inclusive community of
Healing, Help, and Hope

Did You Know?

You don't need to sing to spread the good news. Be part of this global outreach. Check the happenings e-mail each week to learn how you can support the tour.



**Join the Hilltop
Gospel Choir on a
tour to England**

July 5-14, 2022

**Contact Becky Elliston
b.elliston@msn.com
for information.**

STAFF PARISH RELATIONS

The Gifts of Outstanding Staff and Ministry Leadership

By Matt Pettibone

God sent Jesus into the world to begin a transformation to bring forth the intended family of God and the flourishing of all creation. That transformation is ongoing with traction and slippage. In all seasons, God is active. In this season, let us wholeheartedly attune to God's presence and counsel to make this the advent of our transformation. After the celebration of Christmas, may we more earnestly join Christ in the work of Christmas. May 2022 be a year of unboxed, overflowing transformation within and through us in the name of Christ for the sake of the world.

As 2021 draws to a close, it brings upon us a moment of reflection. 2020 and 2021 *have been far from normal years. The world fundamentally changed in early 2020.* COVID brought challenges previously unimagined that continue on in various forms today. Human interaction had to be fundamentally reimagined. Gathering together as a congregation was no longer safe. Yet all yearned for that personal interaction, fellowship, and communal atmosphere. Congregations were challenged to identify creative and new ways to meet the needs of their members. It was not easy to find ways. It was a challenge. It was many long hours. It took a toll on all of us. Hilltop was not spared.....yet Hilltop persevered. Hilltop persevered because of the dedication and love demonstrated by the congregation and its ministries. At the *heart* of the congregation and ministries is the Hilltop staff. The staff kept the torch of hope lit that guided the congregation

through the tough times. The staff worked tirelessly, reinventing new ways to engage, new ways to bring love, new ways to bring fellowship, new ways to connect together as a congregation. The staff kept Hilltop moving forward. Their hard work, love, and dedication have positioned Hilltop to blossom in 2022. We look forward to many new opportunities that lay in front of us for outreach, education, spiritual growth, and fellowship.



As 2021 draws to a close I encourage each of us to reflect on the hard work and dedication put forth by the Hilltop staff. I would encourage each of us consider giving to an End-of-Year gift for Hilltop staff. There are two options should you wish to contribute to this gift. You can donate during worship prior to December 12th. Please note your giving is for the Staff Gift. You can also donate online via the Hilltop website prior to December 15th. Select "Give Now" on the website. The donation page will have a field noted for Staff Gifts. Thanks for your consideration.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Who is My Neighbor?

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

This Month's Book: *Come, Read With Me* by Margriet Ruurs, Illustrated by Christine Wei. Available in the Salt Lake County Library system

It is hard to read the news these days without hearing about a group trying to ban a book from a library or a school curriculum. As an avid reader who uses literature as a way to explore the life experiences of individuals from different backgrounds and in different times in history, I am troubled by this trend. I completely agree that literature for our children should contain age-appropriate themes. I am also concerned that moves to ban books may limit the diversity of experiences children are exposed to while reading.

In that context, I found this month's selection on the shelves at my local library branch. *Come, Read With Me* is a celebration of reading and what can be learned in a good book. Two children move through a fantasy world, imagining adventures and meeting several storybook characters along the way. The book provides an interesting journey in its own right, but also gives readers a chance to look for favorite characters from other books along the way! The illustrations include children with many different skin tones to show that anyone can be a reader.



Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What is something important that you have learned by reading?
2. How does reading help you understand something about your neighbors and your community?

If you have recommendations for books to feature in future months, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Happy Reading!

Children's Sunday School

Calling all children from 4 years to 5th grade (younger children welcome with a parent in attendance)! Join us for a new Sunday School program where we will Celebrate Wonder and learn about God's wonderful world. Classes begin January 9 and will meet from 9:50 to 10:20 am (between the two Sunday morning services). Please contact a member of the Children's Ministry team with questions.

Hilltop United Methodist Church
985 East 10600 South
Sandy, Utah 84094



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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

A poster for a food drive. The background is a collage of various canned food items like soups, beans, and vegetables. Overlaid on this is a semi-transparent white box containing text and a graphic. At the top, the text "SHARE YOUR BOUNTY" is in large, bold, green capital letters. Below it, "Sunday, Dec 5th 9am to 12pm" is in red. In the center is a graphic of a brown paper bag with a red heart and the words "FOOD DRIVE" in bold black letters. To the right of the bag, the text "Share the food God has provided. Drop off in the narthex of nonperishable foods that will go to the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake and Crossroads Urban Center." is in black.

SHARE YOUR BOUNTY
Sunday, Dec 5th 9am to 12pm

FOOD DRIVE

Share the food God has provided. Drop off in the narthex of nonperishable foods that will go to the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake and Crossroads Urban Center.