



# *The* VISITOR

A monthly publication of St. Luke's United Methodist Church - Kilgore, Texas

**LOVE GOD**

**LIVE HIS WORD**

**SHARE HIS GRACE**

December 2020

Issue 12



## BLUE *Christmas*

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## STAY CONNECTED

EVERYDAY | ALL DAY LONG

### Like and follow us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/StLukesUMCKilgore/>

### Like and follow us on Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/stlukeskilgore/>

### Subscribe to our YouTube page

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQI83akQH4YDK-LYIHM0QXQ>

### Sign-up to receive our emails

<http://stlukeskilgore.com/EmailList>

## STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TITHES AND OFFERINGS?

Like llamas and alpacas, [tithes and offerings](#) are often grouped together, but they're definitely not the same thing. A tithe is a specific amount (10% of your income) that you give first, and an offering is anything extra that you give beyond that.

After you've tithed and paid all your bills and necessary expenses for the month, you can then use any extra money in your budget to give even more! This can include giving a cash offering to your church above and beyond your normal tithe, giving money to a charity you support, giving to a friend in need, or giving your time and skills by volunteering.

## WHY TITHE?

The Bible tells us that tithing is a way to show that we trust God with our lives and our finances. But the tithe wasn't put in place for God's benefit—He already owns everything. He doesn't *need* our money. Instead, tithing is meant for our benefit because sacrificing a portion of our income helps us look outside our selfishness and makes us more aware of the needs of others.

In fact, one of the main purposes of tithing is to support the needs of pastors and the work of the local church. Tithes help pay the pastor's salary, keep the church's lights on, and meet the needs of the community.

Tithing is an act of faith that helps us keep our priorities straight. It reminds us that we don't own anything in this life. God is in control, and we're only managers of what He's given us.

Ever notice how unselfish people tend to make better spouses, friends, relatives, employees and employers? Yeah, they usually have better finances too! That's the beauty of tithing. We don't give to get, but God often blesses us with more if we're good managers of what we already have. Tithing recognizes that God is our provider and that we will prosper with more than just money if we rely on Him.

## WAYS TO GIVE at *St. Luke's*



### ONLINE

at  
[stlukeskilgore.com](http://stlukeskilgore.com)



### APP

search for  
Tithe.ly



### BY MAIL

401 E. Main St  
Kilgore, TX 75662



# PRESCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL

Merry Christmas! We are going to have an incredibly sweet month as we combine the Christmas story with Christmas cookies for our Preschoolers! It is going to be so much fun! While cookie cutters, decorations, and excitement will fill this entire month, the focus will be Jesus—specifically, Jesus is God's Son. We want every preschooler to know that what we are celebrating this time of year is the wonderful truth that God loved the world so much that He gave us His only Son, Jesus. We pray that we will all enter this month with the same wonder the shepherds had as they heard the good news for the very first time—a wonder that will inspire us all to go and tell everyone, everywhere that Jesus is God's Son.



## Bottom Line:

Jesus is God's Son.

## Memory Verse:

"God loved the world so much  
that he gave his only Son."

**John 3:16, GNT**



## STAYCONNECTED

Follow us on Facebook to stay up to date on all the great things happening in children's ministry and at St. Luke's MDO

### St. Luke's Kids

<https://www.facebook.com/stlukeskilgorekids>

### St. Luke's MDO

<https://www.facebook.com/stlukesmdo>



The Kilgore Christmas Parade will be December 1, at 6:30pm. The theme is "Christmas in the Oil Patch". If you would like to volunteer to decorate the St. Luke's float or would like to ride on the float, please let Niki Chowdhury know.

## ELEMENTARY SUNDAY SCHOOL

For our Elementary children, Christmas can be filled with all sorts of emotions. Some people easily experience the joy of the season. Some rest in the hope that God is making all things new. But others struggle to find peace due to life's circumstances. With all that's going on this time of year, we thought it'd be great to go back to the basics and simply celebrate Christmas. The truth is, Jesus is best gift God ever gave. Jesus was proof that God loves us and we can trust God no matter what. Because of Jesus, it's possible for us to have a relationship with God that will last forever. As we remember the Christmas story, we take time to celebrate the greatest gift the world has ever known, and rediscover, joy and hope and peace as we rest in the unconditional love of God.

### Memory Verse:

'Today in the town of David a savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.'

**Luke 2:11, NIV**

Check out our "St. Luke's UMC Children's Ministry" Facebook page for activities and lessons.



This month our MDO Chapel focus will be Jesus— specifically, Jesus is God's Son. We want every child to know that what we are celebrating this time of year is the wonderful truth that God loved the world so much that He gave us His only Son, Jesus. We pray that we will all enter this month with the same wonder the shepherds had as they heard the good news for the very first time—a wonder that will inspire us all to go and tell everyone everywhere that Jesus is God's Son. Our Bible memory verse this month will be John 3:16, "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son."

*~Misty Shipman*

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS

Everyone loves to celebrate a Birthday! We want to help your family create your own Happy Birthday Jesus Party. We will be giving out Happy Birthday Jesus Boxes on Sunday, December 13. The box will have everything you need to bake a birthday cake for Jesus as a family fun night. During this time, you can talk to your kids about the birth of Jesus, God's only Son. Sing Happy Birthday and celebrate Jesus! Contact Niki Chowdhury for more information about receiving a box.



## DOWNLOAD THE PARENT CUE APP





## SR. HIGH BIBLE STUDY

### It's Personal

Who doesn't love Christmas lights? They just have a way of making the holiday season feel a little bit brighter. This month we'll look at the brightest spot of the Christmas season—the light that Jesus brought to the world thousands of years ago. And as we look back to that first Christmas, we'll see it's a light that not only illuminates more of who God is, but it's one that invites us to come close and develop a deeper understanding of who He is.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."  
Isaiah 9:6 NIV

*~Misty Shipman*



### STAYCONNECTED

Follow us on Instagram and Facebook to stay up to date on all the great things happening with St. Luke's Youth.

#### St. Luke's Youth

<https://www.facebook.com/stlukesyouthkilgore>

@sly\_srhigh



## JR. HIGH BIBLE STUDY

In Jr. High Youth, we are kicking off December with a new series, "Best Christmas Ever". We aim to help your students see that what makes Christmas the best is the God who came to be with us, and invites us to experience Him in a real, personal way. We're excited to have the best Christmas ever this season with you! Our memory verse will be "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace to those on whom his favor rests." LUKE 2:14 NLT

Parents, check out the series devotionals on the YouVersion Bible App and follow along with your students! Just search for Best Christmas Ever in the "Plans" section of Bible.com or in the YouVersion Bible App. Challenge your students to complete the plans with you, and share what you're learning through the devotionals.

Blessings,

*~Niki Chowdhury*



## The RISE Conference January 22-24

More details to come!

## YOUTH WORKDAY @ CROSSROADS

On November 7, youth and adult volunteers from St. Luke's gathered at Cross Roads UMC to rebuild and repaint an existing wheelchair ramp. The youth worked hard and learned many new skills under the guidance of the adult volunteers. Thank you to Rev. Ben Bagley, Heather Chisum, EJ Chowdhury, Mackenzie Chowdhury, Gretchen McDaniel, Cathy Mount, Garry Mount, Daniel Shipman, and Jack Matthews from UMARMY. Without the time and effort of the adult volunteers these youth opportunities would not be possible. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the congregation of Cross Roads UMC for partnering with us on this project and bringing us lunch, and to Anna Rohde for putting us in contact with the members of Cross Roads. The youth who participated in this project were Gage Chisum, Madison Chisum, Cade Clark, Autumn McDaniel, Madison McDaniel, Trent McDaniel, Cooper Shipman, and Kaylie Watkins.

# YOUTH WORK DAY 6





## CHRISMON'S FOR SALE

Instead of purchasing Christmas Poinsettias, we want to offer you the opportunity to honor and remember your loved ones by purchasing a Chrismon. The Chrismon's are ornaments that we place on our church Christmas tree that help tell the story of our faith. When you purchase a Chrismon, the person that you are honoring or remembering will have their name written on the back of the ornament. These ornaments will not just be displayed this year, but will continue to be used alongside our other Chrismon's for years to come. Each handmade ornament will cost \$10. Orders can be placed in the church office or by contacting Jennifer Powell.

903-984-3576  
stlukesumc@stlukeskilgore.com

## ONLINE SAFE SACTUARY TRAINING

We are now offering Online Safe Sanctuary Training. If you missed the Safe Sanctuary Training in November, or were planning to go to the training that was canceled, you can watch the training video and take a short quiz by visiting our website, [www.stlukeskilgore.com](http://www.stlukeskilgore.com).

Remember, children's ministry and youth ministry volunteers are required to participate in regular training events and submit to an annual background check. Contact the church office if you need any assistance completing the training.

## BLUE Christmas

### Advent Sermon Series

**November 29**  
The Candle of Loss  
Isaiah 40:1-8

**December 6**  
The Candle of Pain  
Matthew 1:18-21

**December 13**  
The Candle of Anxiety  
Luke 1:26-34

**December 20**  
The Candle of Darkness  
Matthew 1:23-25

## SHOW YOUR ST. LUKE'S PRIDE!

Purchase your St. Luke's Yard sign today!

**\$10 each**

Contact the church office for more information or to purchase your sign.



## TIPS TO WORSHIPING AT HOME

**Prepare: Make it your own**

### DESIGNATE A SACRED SPACE IN YOUR HOME.

- Clean up the area.
- Position the furniture so you can see the screen.
- Silence your devices. Declare it a "device-free" zone (except of course for the one on which you are using to watch the service).

### CREATE AN ALTAR.

- Use a table or fireplace.
- Light a candle as worship begins. Snuff it out when worship ends.
- Display meaningful objects such as a cross, flowers from your yard, a special rock or shell, a blue cloth for Advent.
- Don't forget your Bible!
- Set out an empty bowl or plate as a symbol of giving your offering.

### WONDERING WHAT TO WEAR?

- That's up to you, but make a conscious decision. Pajamas? Great! Jeans? Go for it. Sunday best? More power to ya. Make sure everyone in your family knows.

### WORSHIP IS FOR CHILDREN TOO!

- Remind children to bring their Bibles and Bible storybooks.
- Invite them to bring an offering they can place in the bowl or basket.
- Make your own clipboards like the ones we have in the sanctuary! Print out activity sheets (mazes, word searches, crossword puzzles, coloring sheets) that connect to the week's scripture. Gather up pencils or crayons too.

### PARTICIPATE

- **DON'T JUST SIT THERE. THIS ISN'T TV.**

### JOIN IN THE RESPONSES.

- Sing along. Find the Scripture in your Bible. Stand for its reading. Kneel for prayer. Clap. Dance. Take notes.
- When Pastor Ben shares a word for children, encourage the children to pay attention. Invite children to participate in the rest of the service as they are able, but young children might just need to play with quiet toys on the floor.
- Don't be afraid to pause the service to take care of personal needs or the needs of those with whom you are worshipping.
- Set up a Facebook "Watch Party" to include your Facebook friends. It's sort of like inviting your friends to your church. (Obviously if you do this, then you will need your device.)

### AFTER THE SERVICE

- **TALK ABOUT IT.**

### ENGAGE IN DISCUSSIONS.

- "What's your takeaway?" "What was most meaningful to you?"
- Call a friend who worshipped too and talk about it.
- Create a tradition around this time like enjoy Sunday brunch or special meal

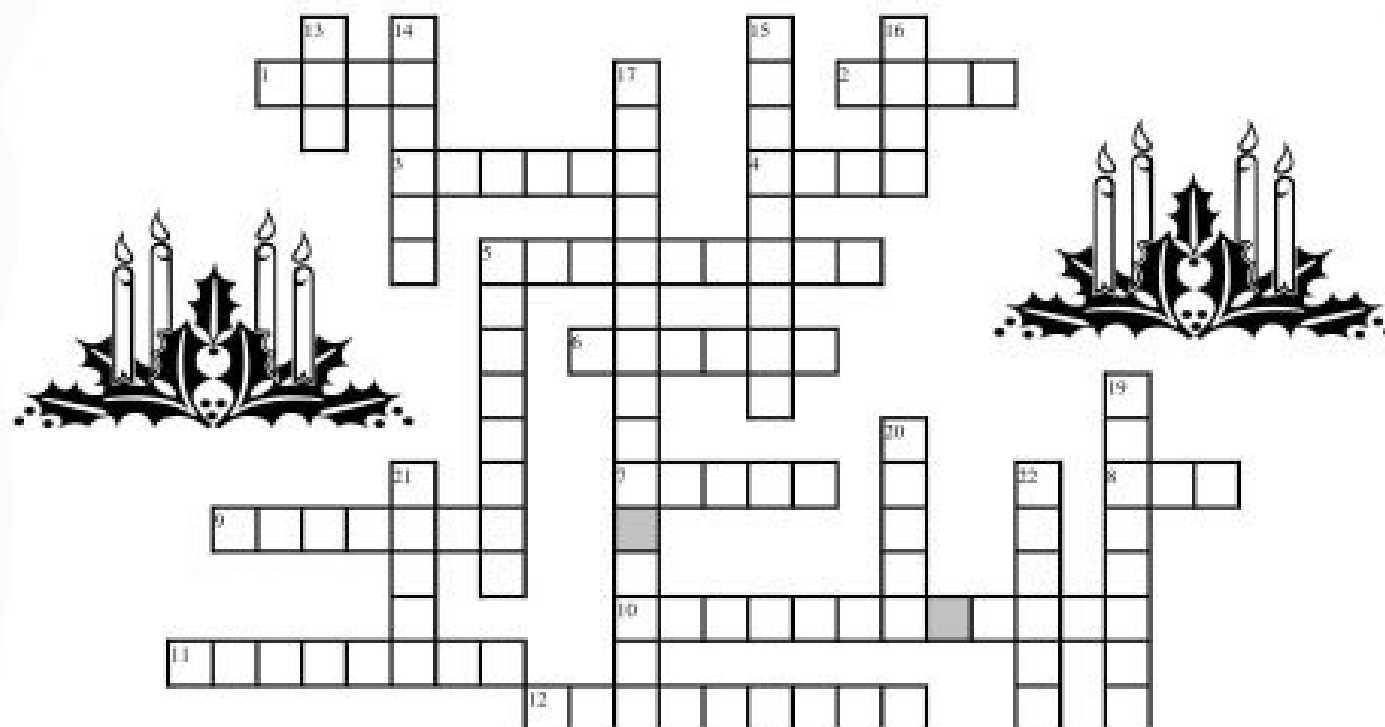
## WORSHIP FACEBOOK GROUP

For those worshipping with us on-line we have a new way for you to join us. We will no longer be posting our live worship services to the St. Luke's Facebook page. Instead we have created a Worship Group, anyone can join the group and watch our worship services. This will allow us to have a central location for all of our worship videos without having to wade through all the posts on our page. Use the link below to join our worship Facebook group or search for St. Luke's UMC Worship on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/394986931511537>

# Advent Crossword Puzzle

Put each word in the correct boxes based on the clues.



## Across

1. Advent is the \_\_\_ Sunday's prior to Christmas.
2. The liturgical color of the 3rd Sunday of Advent is \_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_ is the start of the liturgical year.
4. The symbol of the 1st Sunday of Advent is \_\_\_.
5. The \_\_\_ branches represent the unending love of God.
6. \_\_\_ is the liturgical color for the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Sunday of Advent.
7. Christ is the \_\_\_ of the world.
8. Each candle on the Advent wreath represents \_\_\_ week.
9. The 3rd Sunday of Advent is called \_\_\_ Sunday.
10. The circular shape of the Advent wreath represents \_\_\_.

11. The 3rd candle is called the \_\_\_'s Candle.
12. The day that Jesus was born is \_\_\_ day.

## Down

13. The symbol of the 3rd Sunday of Advent is \_\_\_.
14. One candle is lit each Sunday on the Advent \_\_\_.
15. The 2nd candle is called the \_\_\_ Candle.
16. The symbol of the 4th Sunday of Advent is \_\_\_.
17. The first Sunday of Advent is the start of the new \_\_\_.
18. Another name for Jesus is \_\_\_.
19. The 1st candle is called the \_\_\_ Candle.
20. The 4th candle is called the \_\_\_'s Candle.
21. The symbol of the 2nd Sunday of Advent is \_\_\_.
22. Advent means that Jesus is "\_\_\_".

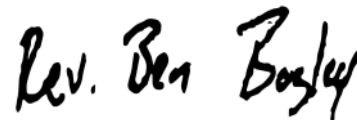
**Rejoice in hope,  
be patient in tribulation,  
be constant in prayer.  
Romans 12:12**

Advent is here, Christmas is around the corner and for what feels like the millionth time this year, we are facing a surge in Covid-19 in our surrounding area. This time of year is always full of joy and excitement, with meals to plan and events to coordinate. Even with the surge we are facing, I am confident that not only will we make it through, but we will also find creative and fun ways to celebrate this upcoming Christmas season.

I came across the passage from Romans listed above and realized that it is a fitting scripture to help us close out this extraordinary year. There has been much to be sad about but still we rejoice in hope. We rejoice because this is not the end, we rejoice because God is still in control and in this Christmas season we rejoice because Christ is born. We will continue to face problems and hardships and patience seems to be fleeting at times, but I encourage you to wrap the hardships with both hope and prayer.

While our Advent season will look different, I am excited that we have a plan to gather together for Advent. After meeting with the Board of Stewards we have decided to continue meeting for worship in December. Beginning on November 29, we will have both of our services in the gym. This allows us to ensure that the space is sanitized and that we maintain adequate space between each other. Out of an abundance of caution, we will not have Sunday School or any church programming. Our biggest concern is for our members and ensuring that each and everyone of you is kept in the safest possible space.

The Board of Stewards will meet again in the middle of December to reassess what our area looks like in terms of the virus and determine what we will begin in January. If you have any questions please let me know. I am grateful for the patience that you have shown with the Staff and volunteers as we navigate this crazy time. Rejoice, Christmas is almost here.



Rev. Ben Bagley  
Sr. Pastor

# 11 WESLEY BROS. CARTOON

The problem with the Stages of Grief is that we're not all at the same stage at the same time. One person in your house may have anger or deny the problem while another suffers depression. One person may bargain (okay I'll social distance for just ONE more week!) while another has accepted that things have changed for the long haul. Depending on your job, one person may still have tons of work to do while another finds herself unemployed. We are experiencing a global tragedy that at once causes both a unified grief and a disparate experience.

## Goofball Lament

Some of the best comedians struggle with depression. Deborah Serani, author of *Living With Depression*, suggests that creating laughter is a "counter phobic" way to deal with inner pain. While some may use it as a mask to pretend they have no troubles, perhaps a healthier alternative is to let it be a way to lament. Like a jester's comedy satirizes real problems with the King, goofball lament is a way many of us make light of the heaviness we feel. It's why you choose to read memes about COVID-19 after reading all the headlines. It's why you send videos of yourself dancing terribly to crazy music. You use humor to hold onto hope while at the same time expressing how hopeless you feel in the moment.

I believe we need both true lament and goofball lament to survive times like these. True lament, whether it be songs, poems, or just honest conversation about our desperation, allows us to name the truth of our emotions and fears. If all we do is joke about it and never face reality for what it is, we run the risk of suppressing our emotions and feeling disconnected and isolated. If you tend to only practice goofball lament, you start to carry the weight of the world without realizing that the people closest to you are shouldering the burden with you. You start to think it's your job to lift everyone's spirits and what once was counter phobic behavior now only adds to your own burden.

## Name the Pain, Name the Hope

The best conversations I've had with friends and family during this time are a smattering of true lament and straight up stupid funny GIFs and memes. We comfortably express our fears and anger with each other. We name the pain and anxiety and find comfort in discovering solidarity with others experiencing the same thing. Even when one friend is overwhelmed by too much work and another has nothing to do, there's a shared lament in the loss of what was. I am blessed to work for a pastor who very intentionally names the pain of reality in every meeting, placing us in this moment in history before we discuss the work to be done. Name the pain of

loss. Name the pain of uncertainty.

Then name the hope. Here's where goofball lament frees us to claim human dignity in the midst of sorrow. Sure, humor is a defense mechanism. It's a way to shift the constant feelings of sadness towards joy. Humor can be an avoidance technique, or it can be the creative expression that reminds us God is still good. Name the pain, then name the hope. The emperor has no clothes. It's the sad truth, and it's also really cathartic to make fun of that guy.

This week, I feel more like Charles than John. I am struggling to discover new best practices for youth ministry. While I'm enjoying some of the ways I feel more connected than usual through digital communication, I am deeply missing the in-person connection with my students. The Johns of the world are busy brainstorming ways to thrive in a COVID-19 world. They accept that we have a new reality; that even when we eventually can return to business as usual, it won't be the same. Kids will have lost half a year of school, many at critical times for essential lifelong learning goals. Unemployment is at an unprecedented reality. Millions of people will not magically have jobs again when this is all over. The Johns of this world are busy figuring out how to mobilize the church to be the hands and feet of Jesus in this new world.

While I hope I can be more like John next week, this week, I'm a Charles. My cup is half empty and I'm telling jokes that make me laugh in the hopes of reclaiming my dignity. I'm singing songs that make me cry and make me dance to remind myself that I am entirely human, and that's a beautiful thing. I'm connecting with friends and family and students to just be present in this moment in time. And you know what? I'm cool with that.

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Previously published at <https://um-insight.net/>

*When not drawing the Wesley Bros cartoon, the Rev. Charlie Baber, a United Methodist deacon, serves as youth minister at University United Methodist Church in Chapel Hill, N.C. His cartoon appears on United Methodist Insight by special arrangement.*



The Rev. Charlie Baber, author of Wesley Bros cartoon.

## HYMNS FOR QUARANTINE



CRABER 4-20 WesleyBros.Com



CRABER 4-20 WesleyBros.Com



CRABER 4-20 WesleyBros.Com



CRABER 4-20 WesleyBros.Com

# 13 CALENDAR

**The following events and programs have been canceled for the month of December:**

**Sunday School**  
**Children's Church**  
**Wednesday Night Activities**

**Lunchtime Bible Study**  
**Women's Ministry**

Weekly updates to the calendar can be found in the weekly email and on our Facebook page. If you do not currently receive the weekly email please contact the church office or use the link below to sign up.

<http://stlukeskilgore.com/EmailList>

## **Sunday, November 22**

8:30am Arise Worship  
10:30am Traditional Worship

**Both services will be Online ONLY**

## **Monday, November 23-Friday, November 27**

The Office will be closed

## **Thursday, November 26**

Happy Thanksgiving

## **Sunday, November 29**

8:30am Arise Worship  
10:30am Traditional Worship

**Both services will be in the Gym**

## **Sunday, December 6**

8:30am Arise Worship  
10:30am Traditional Worship

**Both services will be in the Gym**

## **Tuesday, December 8**

TBD Drive-Thru Communion

## **Sunday, December 13**

8:30am Arise Worship  
10:30am Traditional Worship

**Both services will be in the Gym**

## **Sunday, December 20**

8:30am Arise Worship  
10:30am Traditional Worship

**Both services will be in the Gym**

## **Thursday, December 24**

6:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
11:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

## **Sunday, December 27**

10:30am Combined Worship (**Gym**)

## **GUESS WHO?**

**Join us in a fun little game.**

Can you guess who is in the picture below? Be the first to contact Jennifer in the church office with the correct answer to receive a prize.

We need more images to keep playing the game each month. Send us a baby or childhood picture of yourself to participate.

### **Contact**

(903) 984-3576  
stlukesumc@stlukeskilgore.com  
(713) 306-4274 (Jennifer's cell)



## **CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWER KEY**

### **Across**

- Four
- Rose
- Advent
- Hope
- evergreen
- Violet
- light
- One
- Gaudete
- Eternal life
- Shepherd
- Christmas

### **Down**

- Joy
- Wreath
- Bethlehem
- Love
- Liturgical Year
- Emmanuel
- Prophecy
- Angel
- Peace
- Coming

## JOYS & CONCERNS

Please keep us updated on your loved ones.  
People will remain on this list for one month.  
Please let us know if they need to be on longer,  
903-984-3576.

## PRAYERS FOR OUR FAMILY & FRIENDS

Babby Carroll.....sister of April Watson  
Cindy Frederick.....sister of April Watson  
Deb Gibson.....wife of Scott Gibson  
Sharon Schoenemann.....sister of Jan Hattaway  
Isabel Shipman.....mother of Daniel Shipman  
Juanita Shughart.....mother of Misty Shipman  
Edith Williams.....friend of many  
Kim Worl.....sister of Shelia Cross

## PRAYERS FOR OUR MEMBERS

Don & Cynthia Adams	James Reynolds
Marian Clemens	Willie Roberts
Tommy Freeman	Glennys Travis
Jacque & Todd Gibbs	Wilbur & Kay Yates
Gary Gray	
Sandra Holley	
Sam Holley	
Ronnie Jobe	
Wilma Jones	

## MONTHLY PRAYER FOCUS

St. Luke's Chancel Choir & Arise Band  
White Oak ISD  
Crossroads UMC  
Our Country

## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Name	Date
Clifton & Karen Lynch	Dec 18, 1999
Jay & Tamara Dean	Dec 19, 1992
Matt & Amanda Patton	Dec 22, 2012
Daniel & Misty Shipman	Dec 23, 1995
Joe & Barbara Johnson	Dec 24, 1958
Wendell & Carolyn Holcombe	Dec 26, 1970

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Please say a prayer for our church family on their special day.  
**If we missed your date, please call the church office  
(903-984-3576).**

**December 3**  
Murray Holland

**December 5**  
Abby Eckert  
Alyx Hoberecht

**December 6**  
Jean Gray

**December 7**  
Wayne Fortson

**December 8**  
Cynthia Adams  
George Jones  
Jack Sprayberry  
Les Thurston

**December 9**  
Carol Brady  
Richard Ross

**December 10**  
Marcy Huey

**December 11**  
Rayce Tuck  
Wade Wilson

**December 12**  
Wilma Jones  
Kathe Miller  
James Mooney

**December 13**  
Riley Ridge  
Scott Silvey

**December 14**  
William Bagley  
Peggy Clarke  
RoseAnna Howell  
Elijah Williams

**December 15**  
Dean Miller

**December 16**  
Cora Davis  
Jess Stephens

**December 18**  
Dee Arbuckle

**December 19**  
Marie Murray  
Jo Stiles

**December 20**  
Payton Berger  
Elaine Tinkler

**December 21**  
Guston Browning  
Glennys Travis

**December 22**  
Loretta Ross

**December 23**  
Karman Loyd

**December 24**  
Bobbie Smith

**December 25**  
Jimmy Burgess  
Jamie Haynes

**December 27**  
Kalynn Harrison

**December 29**  
Lexi Copeland

**December 30**  
Dan Brown

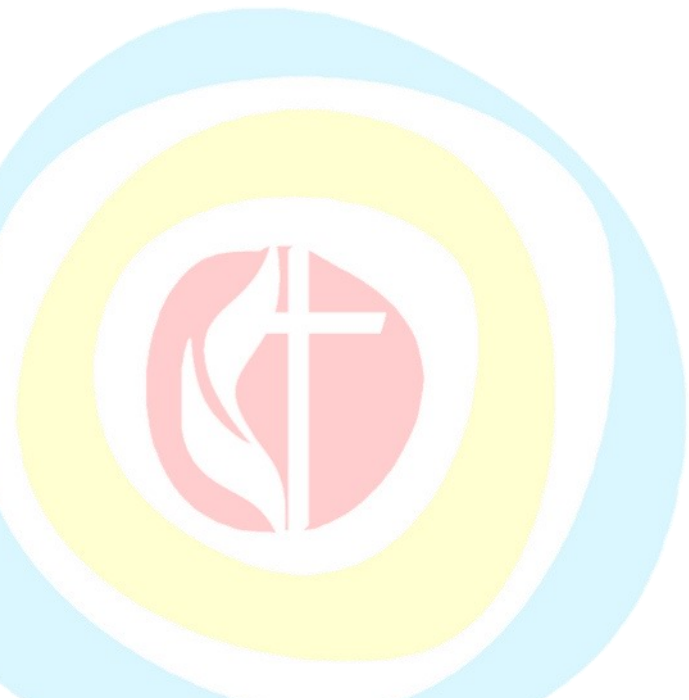
**December 31**  
Kayleigh Johnson  
Tucker Konczak  
Chuck Kunkel  
Angel Ortiz  
Ann Rosson

*The*  
**VISITOR**

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Permit No. 202

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



*christmas eve*  
candlelight service

DECEMBER 24 | 6PM & 11PM

