

December 1st  
2016

---

*worship... walk... work...*

---

## Altarnative Thoughts

By Dr. Jonathan Bynum.

The word "advent" means "coming." Advent is the season of waiting, of preparation. Waiting means you anticipate something is about to happen or someone is going to come. We can enjoy Advent's waiting because we know it will end on Christmas Day and until then we have parties to attend, movies to watch, music to listen to, and Christmas lights to admire.



*walk*

But most waiting his aggravating. We wait in traffic, stuck in the "fast lane," unable to move over to exit the gridlock. We buy gifts, only to wait in long checkout lines at the store. We wait, wondering why God still hasn't gifted us with a spouse or a child. We wait for healing that never seems to come. We wait for peace and justice.

We hate to wait when we don't know when it will end...if it will end.

During Advent, we not only wait for Christmas, celebrating when Jesus was born-Emmanuel, "God is with us;" we are also preparing for Jesus to come again. We sing, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," not merely looking back but also looking forward to the time when Jesus will return to right every wrong, to finish the work of New Creation, to make everything as he originally intended.

That's why for many people Christmas brings melancholy. We think Christmas is "the most wonderful time of the year," so we should be happiest, but our reality is such a stark contrast: we are painfully aware that our lives are not as they should be, not as we planned them to be. That's when the full message of Advent means the most: the way things are is not the way things will always be; this life isn't all there is; even the very best of this world is only a bland appetizer for our forever pleasures; when we are with Jesus we will have no regrets about anything we thought we missed out on in this

life.

An aching heart is a heart waiting. A heart waiting tells us more awaits us. Something great is about to happen because Someone is going to come.

I can't wait!

## *Advent Devotionals*

Prepare to celebrate Christ's birth.

If you currently receive the Bear Creek UMC e-News (sent each Thursday at noon), you will also begin receiving a daily Advent devotional (ending December 31). If you do not want to read the daily devotionals you may simply delete them. ***Please note that if you unsubscribe, you will no longer receive the devotionals, however, you will no longer receive the e-News either.***



*walk*

If you would like to subscribe to both the e-News and Advent devotionals click [here](#).

---

## *Christmas Cantata*

The Winter Rose.

Have you been assaulted since August by Christmas glitter and gift displays in the stores? Join the Chancel Choir and guest singers from Cy-Woods High School, accompanist Diane Garrett, and a 15-piece orchestra on **Sunday, December 11** during the 11am worship service for a celebration of the REAL Christmas message.



*walk*

Our cantata, "The Winter Rose," uses the symbolism of a rose as an expression of love and peace both inside the Church and in the outside world. Let your spirit be encouraged by the beauty of God's greatest gift set to beautiful music. "The Winter Rose" reminds us that even in the deepest winter, we are a people of joy and life.

---

## *Christmas Cards for Sale*

Featuring original artwork by our Youth & Children.

Help our Children's Ministry fund their summer field trip by purchasing Christmas cards featuring artwork drawn by the youth and children of Bear Creek UMC. Cards will be available each Sunday in the narthex of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall through Sunday, December 11.



*work*

---

## *PB&J and Tuna*

Bring your donations this Sunday, December 4.

The *Houston Northwest Community Center* food pantry is located on our church property. **On an average pantry night over 200 families are served, representing 600+ individuals, of which**

**about 400 are children.** For the past two months the HNwCC food pantry has spent an additional \$3,000/month, in addition to regular donations, just to meet the needs of their clients. As you can see the need is great, so please continue to bring your donations. Thank you!



*work*

---

## *The Angels are Here!*

Sharing God's love with children in our community.

This Christmas Bear Creek UMC will be once again be reaching out and connecting with over 75 Angel Tree children and their caregivers. Your help is needed as we share God's love, our love, and the love of their incarcerated parent to each one of these children.



*work*

The Angel Christmas Tree will be up in the Narthex on Sunday, December 4. The tree will be filled with angels requesting 2 gifts for each child. Each child will receive a clothing gift and a toy or fun gift. These gifts should be in the \$20-\$25 price range. In addition to the two gifts, each child and caregiver will also receive a stuffed stocking as a gift from our church. There will also be angels on the tree requesting gift cards for each family.

Gifts can be returned to the Narthex on Sunday, December 4 or Sunday, December 11. They may also be returned to the church office from December 1 to December 9. **ALL GIFTS, STOCKING STUFFERS, AND GIFT CARDS MUST BE RETURNED BY DECEMBER 11.**

As always, your help with this very rewarding outreach mission is appreciated. If you would prefer to make a monetary donation, please make checks payable to BCUMC with "Angel Tree" in the memo line.

---

## *Advent Decorating Done*

Thank You!

A big "thank you" to Al Balboni, Rex Littrell and Jeff Jones helping put up the trees and all the garland in the Sanctuary on Saturday. Also, thank you to Beverly Robertson and her sister Janet Sessarego for getting the choir loft garland ready to hang by locating the hanging wires. Lastly, thanks again to Rex Littrell for helping me on Friday get everything out of storage. ~ *Bill Clark*



*work*

---

## *Christmas Block Party*

New location this year. Sunday, December 4.

Our annual Christmas Block Party is Sunday, December 4 from 3:30 to 6:30pm in the parking lot of **Northwest Glass & Mirror Co., located at [5106 Hwy 6 N](#)**. This event is FREE to the community. We will have crafts, music, food and fellowship. There is a rumor that Santa may even make an appearance!



*walk*

## *Hour of Prayer*

Second Tuesday. Fellowship Hall @ 7pm.

Hour of Prayer (HOP) will be on the second Tuesday of the month (December 13) in the Fellowship Hall. Please come to join us in song, readings from Scripture and meditations, and prayer. You will share in a Joy to the Lord and a Blessing to each of us.



*walk/worship*

---

## *Youth News*

Block Party. Parade of Lights.

Sunday is our opportunity to SHINE for Jesus at the Community Block Party and Parade! We would love for each youth to participate and help in showing hospitality to our neighbors at the Block Party - meet at 3:30pm at Northwest Glass & Mirror's parking lot (Hwy 6 @ Addicks/Satsuma) and get your instructions on which area you will be helping (cookie decorating, Santa helper, hot dog distribution, etc).

Those who have signed up to be on the float will receive an email from Lea Bynum with specifics on riding in the parade.



*walk*

Check your weekly Youth Newsletter for all the upcoming events for our Bear Creek Youth! Contact [Lea Bynum](#) to be added to the newsletter or for any Youth-related questions.

---

## *AWANA on Wednesdays*

December 7 @ 6:30pm in the FLC gym.



*worship*

Bear Creek United Methodist is devoted to nurturing your children with scriptural teaching, fun activities, and opportunities to cultivate great friendships that last forever.

Here are a few things to remember:

- On Wednesday, December 7, please drop off (6:30) and pick up (8:00) your child in the Tree House on the second floor of the Family Life Center.
- Fill out a new Kidzone Registration ([English](#) or [Spanish](#)) form for 2016-17.
- Pay the \$20.00 registration fee per family for 2016-17.

Please contact me if you have questions concerning any ministry to children here at Bear Creek United Methodist Church. Click [here](#) for the schedule.

Thanks,  
John R. Henley  
281.463.2330

---

## *Online and Text Giving*

Electronic giving. From your smartphone.

We now offer online and text giving on our website. Both options

are facilitated through Shelby Systems, Inc., our church administration software, which is highly secure. You will find links and instructions on the [giving](#) page of our website. **Thank you** for your faithful contributions that allow us to continue the various ministries of Bear Creek United Methodist Church!



worship

---

## Energizers

December 16. Clay's. 11:00am.

**Energizers**, a group of active adults age 50-plus, enjoy gatherings that include day-long excursions. On December 16 we will meet at Clay's (17717 Clay Road) @ 11:00am; everyone is responsible for their lunch. If you would like to participate in the gift exchange, please bring a \$10.00 gift marked "female", "male" or "either". Come and join the fellowship.



walk

**Fellowship Friday**, an Energizers outreach ministry, provides a loving, welcoming and fun environment for family members with mild to moderate memory loss who do not require skilled care. This program, a partnership between Interfaith CarePartners and BCUMC, is designed to give caregivers some much needed time away. **Our next meeting is December 9 from 10am to 1:30pm.** The theme for December is *Christmas* and the entertainment is the Decibells (group of singers/entertainers).

---

## Western Prayer Wall

FLC 101. Leave a Prayer Request.

Been to the Holy Land? If it's too far or you've already been, visit our BCUMC Western Prayer Wall any time during church office hours or on Sunday. Please leave your prayer request in the crevices of the wall. Thank you - the Prayer Ministry Team.



walk

---

## A Time to Pray Together

Prayer Room - Ministry Village. Wednesdays @ 9:15am.

Come to pray with us for the congregational needs of BCUMC and for what God puts on our hearts. We are trusting in His Promise, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." ~ Matthew 18:20



walk

