



# NEWSLETTER

Shelly Wilson-Senior Minister, Andy Bachmann-Associate Minister,  
Vince Amlin-Associate Minister, Lisa Goldstein-Editor

WHOEVER YOU ARE  
WHEREVER YOU ARE  
ON LIFE'S JOURNEY  
YOU ARE  
WELCOME  
HERE

## December 2015

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## Advent & Christmas Worship

### *"Waiting in the Wings"*

**Sunday, Dec. 6:** 9:15am - Children's Christmas Pageant, 11:15am - Worship, Shelly Wilson. All Church Band. Annual Youth United Chili Lunch Fundraiser.

**Sunday, Dec. 13 at 11:00am & 7:00pm** - Services of Nine Lessons & Carols. Reception in Reimer Hall following the evening service.

**Sunday, Dec. 20:** 9:15 & 11:15am - Worship, Vince Amlin

**Thursday, Dec. 24: Candlelight Christmas Eve Services at 4:30, 7:30 & 9:30pm** with Shelly Wilson, Andy Bachmann and Vince Amlin

**Sunday, Dec. 27:** One service "For Everything There is a Season" at 10:00am followed by a potluck brunch. Coordinated by the Board of Parish Ministry.

## Waiting

**Want to help**  
**Angels sing**  
**Infant babe**  
**The newborn king**  
**Incredible gift**  
**Nice to others**  
**Giving hope to our sisters and brothers**

~ Taylor Trospen, age 9



**See pages 2 and 3 for special traditions and opportunities for giving during this Advent season.**

# Special Holiday Events in December

## Advent Reflection Booklets

This year's Advent Reflection booklets feature original artwork, music, and writing by UCG members and are centered on the December worship theme, "Waiting in the Wings." The booklets include a special focus for meditation on each day of the Advent season. Special thanks to the committee who put together the booklets and to all who contributed their work! Booklets are available in the sanctuary foyer and from the church office, starting on the first Sunday of Advent, November 29.

## Women's and Men's Lunch Groups Holiday Celebration!

The Women's and Men's Lunch Group will celebrate holiday potluck lunches on **Friday, December 4** in the West Wing and Reimer Hall at noon! Join us for good food and wonderful fellowship! Everyone is invited!

## UCG Annual Children's Holiday Craft Fair

**SATURDAY, December 5, 3:00pm–5:00pm in Reimer Hall**—An opportunity for elementary-age children to make simple holiday crafts for their loved ones. Suggested donation for materials is \$5 for the first child and \$3 for each additional sibling. Child care for infants to 2yrs is available. For more information contact Christine Engels at [tinearcher@hotmail.com](mailto:tinearcher@hotmail.com). **Family Pizza Picnic Dinner in the Courtyard following at 5pm.** Bring a picnic or purchase slices of pizza and bottled water to support the UCG playground fund.

## Children's Christmas Pageant

It's time for the United Church of Gainesville's Annual Family Christmas Pageant on **Sunday, December 6 at the 9:15am service** in the Sanctuary. This is the eighth year that the children of UCG have performed the story of Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus, and every year it's more fun than the last. Please join us in celebrating the holiday season; we can guarantee a fun and joyous event for everyone!

## All Church Band

As is our Christmas tradition, all people who now play or who have ever played a band instrument are invited to join in the UCG all church band for the Christmas Medley and sing-a-long on **Sunday December 6 at the 11:15am service**. Grab a part in the foyer and come to rehearsal at 10:45am on December 6.

## Youth United Annual Chili Lunch

**December 6 from 10:30am-12:30pm** - Youth United's annual **Chili Lunch** fundraiser helps pay for its special trips, including the winter Mystery Trip and spring break Work Tour. Bring your appetite and enjoy a bowl of delicious chili, bratwurst, hot dogs, veggie dogs, and dessert. Choose from more than a dozen different varieties of chili, including vegetarian. Costs are \$7 for adults (16 and older), \$5 for children ages 3-15, free for children ages 2 and under. **Donations of chili or desserts are welcome.**

## 24th Annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

**Sunday, December 13** – a UCG tradition of instrumental music, choral anthems and scripture. Two services will be held on Sunday at **11am and 7pm**. Child care is provided at both services. There is a wonderful reception following the 7pm service. Coffee, tea and punch are provided. **Please bring a finger food treat to share.** — **Lessons & Carols CDs will be on sale on December 20th.** Pre-orders will be taken during choir practice for choir members; others can contact Kathy Funke through the church office if you want to place a pre-order. No money will be collected until the actual CD sale. In addition, there will be some CDs available for those who did not pre-order.

## The First Annual Christmas Day Holiday Hangout

On Christmas morning, we'll carpool to Silver Springs State Park where we'll kayak or canoe, ride the glass-bottom boats, hike, or even hire trail rides, then gather for a picnic and conversation, and maybe a Christmas carol or two. All ages are welcome. Contact Ruth Saunders at [saunders123@cox.net](mailto:saunders123@cox.net).

# Giving During Advent

- ✳ **Food First Sunday is December 6 and January 3** - We exceeded our goal of 150 lbs. in November with a total of 236lbs much needed food! If we all shop those BOGOs we will go over our goal of donating ONE TON of food this year to Gainesville Community Ministries. So many good deeds can be done during this season, but food is a necessity. Thanks for your continuing generosity.
- ✳ **Angel Tree**- The Christmas tree arrived in the foyer on Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> and is covered in Angels for you to take, buy the child's gift that is printed on the Angel and place it, **unwrapped, under the tree by Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>**. The gifts will be taken to our Gift Market at Rawlings Elementary on Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup> where parents can purchase a gift for their children for a very small amount of money, around \$3 to \$5. All the proceeds then go to Rawlings school for a fund to help with emergencies. So it is a win-win-win! The parents get an inexpensive gift, the child gets a nice gift, and the school gets a good bit of money. We'd like our gifts to be in the \$25 to \$30 range but if something is more expensive, perhaps two UCG families could go together.
- ✳ **Mini Grants** - Do you know someone who could use a little extra financial assistance this holiday season? Please come by the church office and fill out a Christmas Mini-Grant request. **Forms are due by December 6<sup>th</sup>**, so come by the church office to send your friends, neighbors, co-workers or family a little extra assistance this season. We are limiting our grants this year to those who are referred by someone in our congregation.
- ✳ **Grace Marketplace Stockings** - We are again placing tube socks for folks without homes beneath our angel tree, **beginning November 29**. Take a pair of tube socks. One sock will be rolled inside the other. Fill the sock with useful and fun things for the recipient. Each set of socks will come with a list of suggested items. **BE SURE TO INCLUDE BOTH UTILITARIAN AND FUN THINGS IN THE SOCKS.** Tie the end of the sock and **return to church by December 13<sup>th</sup>**.
- ✳ **Ray Meeks** - Ray Meeks has been on Florida's death row since 1974. In 1981, one of our pastors emeriti, Larry Reimer, began visiting Ray. In 1982, Ray joined UCG from his prison cell. It is our tradition to receive monetary donations that will enable Ray to have spending money for personal items, shoes, sweatshirts, and snacks. There is a basket in the foyer with envelopes for your contributions. If you leave cash rather than a check, please include your name. Ray likes to write thank you notes. There is a booklet in the foyer prepared by Marj Hauptman "Why Do We Care About Ray Meeks?" if you'd like more information. Thanks for your support!
- ✳ **Christmas Eve Emergency Loan Fund offering** - Each year during the Christmas Eve services, we receive a special offering which helps to support UCG members and others in our community who need help through the year. Individuals and families who are experiencing times of crisis and transition are assisted through your help. Thanks for your generous gifts to this Christmas Eve offering.



## Other News and Happenings....

### Post-Christmas Office and Staff Schedules

Everyone on our church staff – ministers, program and office staff, and our custodial staff – work full days and weeks during December. In recognition of their need for holiday time as well as some down time, the church office is closed from December 24 through January 3 and no church activities, other than Sunday worship, are scheduled. The front office answering machine will be checked daily for messages. Any situation that needs immediate attention will be referred to one of the ministers or to the appropriate staff person. Note that e-mail will not be checked during this Christmas break.

**From all the Staff of UCG, we wish you a blessed holiday season, filled with peace!**

### Calling All Experienced (and inexperienced) Dancers!

Star Bradbury, Sandy Reimer, and Jenny Hill are working together with the ministers to include more dance and movement in worship, and are making a list of names to call on to dance with us. If you have a background in dance OR just love to move and would like to be a part of movement in worship services, please email your name, phone number, and what (if any) dance experience you have to Jenny Hill at [jennyrebecca11@gmail.com](mailto:jennyrebecca11@gmail.com). All levels welcome - some movement will be very simple.

### February Adult Seminar Request

Are you or a loved one coping with a life threatening illness? Are you willing to participate in a panel discussion to share your story about the diagnosis, treatment, coping strategies & support groups that work for you during this most difficult time? This seminar will be on 02/17. If yes, please email [ecbate@cox.net](mailto:ecbate@cox.net). Please put "UCG Adult Seminar" in the subject line OR call me (352-363-0957). Thank you, Elizabeth Bate

### UCG Goes to Ireland...A Celtic Pilgrimage with Shelly and Celtic Wayfarers

On Sunday, December 20, at 10:30am Shelly Wilson will hold an information session in Reimer Hall for those interested in a trip to sacred spiritual sites in Ireland in June, 2016. If you cannot attend the information session but are interested in learning more about the trip, please contact Shelly at [shellyw@ucgainesville.org](mailto:shellyw@ucgainesville.org).

### The Unfolding Path



Larry and Sandy Reimer have a new book, The Unfolding Path, published by Book Locker. This is a collection of their sermons, preached at UCG, between 2008 and their retirement in 2012. The book is available at [www.booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com) and through Amazon for \$24.95. The book will be available for \$20 on Sunday, December 6 at UCG during Fellowship time or you may contact the Reimers directly at [sandyr@ucgainesville.org](mailto:sandyr@ucgainesville.org).

### Chamber Music However Known

Before modern times people often joined together in their homes to play and enjoy live music. Some of us still do! On Sunday, Jan. 17, 2016, Lively Arts will host an informal afternoon of chamber music at UCG. If you enjoy classical music, play an instrument or sing, and would like to be a part of this informal musicale please contact Sally Simonis at [sarahsimonis@bellsouth.net](mailto:sarahsimonis@bellsouth.net) for information. All ages and levels of expertise are welcome. You will find a supportive and appreciative audience with us!

## Women's Overnight "Places in the Heart"

**Saturday, Feb. 13 at 10 am until Sunday, Feb. 14 at Noon**

Episcopal Conference Center, Live Oak, Florida

Save the week-end for this wonderful annual women's gathering: time to laugh and reflect, to walk and talk, to sing and be silent, to breathe and to pray as we are connected with one another and with ourselves. Come to be nurtured by the beauty of nature and sacred space, the great food, comfortable facilities, and the company of kindred spirits.

**Registration forms will be available, beginning Wednesday, January 13.** You can pick up a registration form at the church office on week days or on Sunday mornings January 17 and 24; you can download one from the UCG website; or you can contact the church office at [info@ucgainesville.org](mailto:info@ucgainesville.org) to 378-3500 to request an electronic or a paper form. When you complete your registration form, please put it in an envelope with your payment (*according to the type of room you wish*), indicate if you have any preferences for a roommate(s), and then drop off the envelope or mail it to the church office so that it arrives by **the registration deadline, Wednesday, January 27 by 4pm.** We will not be able to accommodate late registrations.

The cost includes the program, supplies, facility charges, three meals and a motel-type room with two double beds and a private bath: **\$144 for a single room; \$101 for a double room; \$88 for a triple room** (*note that two of the three women in a triple room will share a double bed*). If you are willing to stay in a comfortable **cabin** with 8 other women, **the cost is only \$78 for the week-end.** You will have a bunk to yourself with no one sleeping above or below you – and share a large tiled bathroom with the other women in your cabin. If you need financial aid, **you can request scholarship assistance on your registration form**, which reduces the cost of a double room to \$71, a triple room to \$58, and a cabin room to \$48. We are unable to provide scholarship assistance for single rooms.

Please contact the church office if you have any questions about the registration process. We are looking forward to a wonderful week-end!

## UCG History Book

It's not too late to get your copy of "Celebrating 50 Years—1965-2015," UCG's colorful, 110-page history book available for \$25 in the church office. Don't miss your chance to get this important piece of UCG History! If you pre-ordered a copy and have not picked it up, please do so. Thanks!



### **PASSAGES**

- ◆ We surround with loving sympathy Cheryl Poe and Lauren Poe on the death of their mother and grandmother Dorothy Kotwica on November 27, 2015. A memorial service was held at Forest Meadows on Monday, November 30.

## Enlistment Update

Thank you for supporting UCG with your offerings, gifts, and pledges.

We have reached 80% of our goal for the 2016 enlistment campaign

We still need \$146,744 to fund our 2016 budget and plan for our good work.

If you have not yet turned in a pledge card, please do so today. Thanks!

**Thank You  
UCCG**

**For your Support in 2015!**

## From Shelly.....

Many of the old Christmas carols, underneath their sweetness and beauty, reflect a theme of weariness, the desperation of many of the world's peoples, suffering through another year of violence and deprivation. Poverty, war, racism, disease, and environmental degradation all combine to threaten the celebrations all around us.

Yet, also in the old carols, alongside the acknowledgment of the pain, is the persistent message of hope. Consider a portion of the text of "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear:"

"Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled, and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world; above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing, and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing."

In the midst of the challenges in his time (as well as now) of racism, the philosopher and theologian Howard Thurman continued to write his own profound and hopeful words. He is recalling the Magnificat of Mary (Luke 1:39-56) when he writes in his beautiful book, *The Moods of Christmas*:

### **I Will Sing a New Song**

The old song of my spirit has wearied itself out.  
 It has long ago been learned by heart;  
 It repeats itself over and over,  
 Bringing no added joy to my days or lift to my spirit.  
 I will sing a new song.  
 I must learn the new song for the new needs.  
 I must fashion new words born of all the new growth  
 of my life-- of my mind-- of my spirit.  
 I must prepare for new melodies that have  
 never been mine before,  
 That all that is within me may lift my voice unto God.  
 Therefore, I shall rejoice with each new day  
 And delight my spirit in each fresh unfolding.  
 I will sing, this day, a new song unto the Lord.

This year, every year, may the beauty of this Advent season inspire us to offer our own lives in justice and love, and to give the gift of Hope this Christmas.

**In this holiday season, are you looking for racially/culturally inclusive children's literature** so that your gift-giving reflects your values ? Check out these lists!

<https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/detailListBooks.asp?idBookLists=42>

<http://www.pragmaticmom.com/multicultural-books-for-children/>



# PATIENT EXPECTATION

ANDY BACHMANN

## **We Are Neutral**

This fall, the Social Justice Committee at the United Church of Gainesville was exploring ways we can bring environmental concerns to the forefront of the work we were doing on behalf of UCG. And one of us came up with the idea of pursuing being a carbon-neutral congregation.

What does it mean to be carbon neutral?

Basically, any energy we consume results in a carbon footprint- whether it's turning on the lights in the sanctuary or running the A/C for the summer. Carbon dioxide is one of the largest contributors to the greenhouse gases emitted as a result of our energy consumption. By looking at the amount of energy we consume, we can calculate the amount of carbon that is created through our usage-- but there are ways that we can off-set our carbon footprint.

We partnered with the organization "We Are Neutral" to run an assessment of our energy usage and then worked with them to off-set that usage by planting oxygen creators and carbon-dioxide consumers- namely, trees. This winter and spring, we hope to offer you the opportunity to help off-set our carbon footprint through tree-planting field trips we will take with our We Are Neutral partners.

We are proud to be able to call ourselves carbon neutral- and we have issued a challenge to the other churches of the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ to join us in becoming carbon-neutral; and then to proclaim to the wider denomination that the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ is carbon-neutral- and they should be too! We are hoping to help inspire the wider church to take active steps towards being an environmentally-forward denomination.

## **Youth Programs in December and January**

Our Chili Lunch Fundraiser is on December 6<sup>th</sup>, and we hope the whole church will come out to support our program. Youth United uses the money we raise at the Chili Lunch to sponsor our Work Tour and Mystery Trip events every year. We can always use a few extra batches of chili, so if you'd be willing to cook up a batch, please let Charlotte Seubert know by emailing her at [cseubert@anest.ufl.edu](mailto:cseubert@anest.ufl.edu). Come on out on December 6<sup>th</sup>, anytime between 10:30-12:30 and support our youth!

In December, our youth groups will have their Christmas Party on the 20<sup>th</sup>, where we will be doing a little outreach, a little IN-reach AND doing a White Elephant Gift Exchange. Meet up in the Youth Room at 10:15 am.

Both youth groups will kick off again on January 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:15 am in the Youth Room. And our Youth United Mystery Trip is right around the corner, Thursday January 14-16<sup>th</sup>.

## **A Note from Andy**

To my dear UCG family-

The sabbatical experience we just completed was even more rewarding than I could have even imagined. From Santiago, Chile to Santiago de Compostella, Spain, our time away from you was what we hoped it would be: enriching, rewarding, and restful.

I'll be unpacking tales from my experiences in the months ahead through worship offerings and a Sunday Seminar on February 28<sup>th</sup>; but I welcome any questions you may have. Because things are still so fresh for me it can be difficult to describe what all we've done, so send your thoughts and questions my way!

I can't thank you enough for your inspirational emails, too. I'd read them throughout my journey, and I could always find a poignant moment where your thoughts would strike me just right. Thank you for that.

And thank you for being a church that believes in sabbatical. Hard to believe it has been 13 years here at UCG. And I didn't realize I needed the rest until I took it. Would you believe that the first leg of our journey last January was the first time in my life that I had taken more than 5 days off? So the gift of these three months has been an absolute treasure.



# IN VINNY VERITAS

VINCE AMLIN

This week I came across the poem "Questionnaire" by Wendell Berry. I encourage you to Google it and read the whole thing, but here is the final stanza:

*State briefly the ideas, ideals, or hopes,  
the energy sources, the kinds of security;  
for which you would kill a child.  
Name, please, the children whom  
you would be willing to kill.*

It's a pretty intense poem. And yet it reflects almost exactly a very intense national conversation we are having at the moment. I believe Berry correctly identifies the choice between a certain kind of security and the lives of innocent, unnamed children.

It has been disheartening and infuriating to see the responses of many in power to the refugee crisis our world faces. I cannot square my desire to follow the way of Jesus or my belief in a loving God (or a loving humanity!) with the decision to close our state or our arms to those fleeing violence in Syria. My faith asks me to act.

Luckily, you all are way ahead of me (again). We have already been contacted by several church members who are engaged in this work locally. Thanks to them, UCG will be represented in an interfaith group working to welcome potential refugee families here in Gainesville. We don't yet know what this will look like or what it will ask of us, but as that unfolds, I hope you will join us in doing whatever it takes to help whomever we can.

## **Adult Winter Party**

Mark your calendars for the annual Adult Winter Party, coming up Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. Planning has already begun to make this year's party great. If you would like to help organize the Winter Party, please contact Vince at [vincea@ucgainesville.org](mailto:vincea@ucgainesville.org)

## **2015 Rebuilding Together Project**

For several years now, UCG volunteers of all skill levels have come together to complete critical home repairs for the elderly, disabled, and/or low income homeowners of Alachua County. Rebuilding Together of North Central Florida coordinates these efforts with local businesses and social justice groups like ours. For this year's project, United Church of Gainesville partnered with Highlands Presbyterian. Thirty volunteers worked for a total of 235 hours on five Saturdays in October to repair and repaint Ms. Foreman's house. Ms. Foreman, her son Isador, and grandson Izzy all expressed their gratitude for the beautiful transformation.

## ~United Tribes~

UCG Children's Program ~ Director, Keri Trosper

Welcome to another UCG holiday season! It is busy with all of the fun we pack in, and we respect that life is already busy with little ones in play. So, here is all the info. you need in one e-mail.

**Saturday, December 5 - 1:30-2:30 Christmas Pageant rehearsal for 4th and 5th graders ONLY** in the Sanctuary. No other ages need attend. Shay Smith will lead the 4th and 5th graders through their parts. **2:30-5** - Board of Children's Ministries Presents the **Annual Christmas Craft Fair**: All children are invited to attend the annual Christmas Craft Fair where they can make all kinds of fun holiday crafts to keep or give in the West Wing and Reimer Hall. **Immediately following the Fair** we will congregate for a picnic in the courtyard. Bring a blanket for your family and pack a picnic dinner OR bring your blanket and purchase pizza by the slice and bottled water for a small donation to be used toward our playground fund.

**Sunday, December 6 - Christmas Pageant Sunday during the 9:15 service only!** Please bring your child to the West Wing by 8:45a.m. where the guides will be available to assist you in getting your child dressed for pageant. Then head to the Sanctuary with your child to grab a seat and to seat your child in their clearly marked grade's row up front. There will be a childcare aide (in brown shirt) there to check in your child at the end of their row.

### FAQ's for Pageant:

**Did my child make a costume?** - Yes, if they were at church on 11/1 or 11/8. If not, don't worry! Those kids who were there made plenty extra for their friends.

**What is my child missed the rehearsal?** - No problem! Just seat them in their correct row, and we'll take care of getting them on stage for their part.

**What does my child need to wear?** - They can wear whatever they wish from regular church clothes to something they feel is special for pageant. All that matters is that they are happy.

**What is my child in the play?** - **Pre-K** (age 3,4, and 5)- The animals- cow, pig, donkey, **K-1** Sheep or Angel, **2-3** Wise People, **4-5** Speaking part, stage crew, or sign holder

**Is there anything to be nervous about?** - No! The best parts of pageant are when something preciously unexpected happens. Let's just enjoy making memories!

**Saturday, December 12th**- Lessons and Carols Rehearsal! Please do your best to get to this one if your child will be in Lessons and Carols this year. We will meet in the West Wing at 9a.m. to practice with just children before heading over to join the large Lessons and Carols group in the Sanctuary at 9:30a.m. We hope to be done by 10a.m.

**Sunday, December 13th**- Lessons and Carols Performances at 11a.m. and 7p.m. Children will rehearse in the Room 5 from 10:30-11a.m. Then they will head in to perform. For the 7p.m. performance, there will not be an additional rehearsal, so just be seated in the sanctuary.

### Important things to know for Lessons and Carols.

1. This is about as serious as we ever ask the kids to be. Please talk with them about being part of a large performance, and about being respectful during that time.
2. This is as fancy as we will ever ask the kids to be. Please dress your child in "Sunday best" as other churches see it. ;o) Dark colors are most appropriate. Formal dresses or dress pants and collared shirts would be great if you have them.
3. We are still UCG. No one will be turned away if they didn't practice, or if they can't be dressy.
4. Please practice the song with your child in advance. Words below.

**Sundays 12/20-1/3** will be Extended Activity Time. We will resume Tribes with Behavior Reward Sunday on 1/10.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with questions. We are so blessed to be a part of this magical season with your children! Thank you for sharing them with us!

Blessings, Keri - [kerit@ucgainesville.org](mailto:kerit@ucgainesville.org)

## Racial Justice Task Force

The City of Gainesville's Office of Equal Opportunity is sponsoring a "Dessert and Dialogue" film series on health disparities through their Dismantling Prejudices and Biases Initiative. The next part in this series will be shown on Monday, December 14 and will be facilitated by Dr. Nancy Hardt. Dr. Hardt is a colleague of UCG member (and RJTF Co-Chair) Lance Gravlee, who studies the health effects of racism. Join us at the **Gainesville Regional Utilities Administration Building, Multi-Purpose Room located at 301 SE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue on Monday, December 14, 2015**. Registration begins at **5:30 PM** and the film viewing (running time: 29 minutes) starts at **6:00 PM**. A discussion will follow.

## Tally Rally 2016

Two years ago, our church made its first trip to Tallahassee to advocate on behalf of legislation to protect people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and their families. A lot has changed for LGBTQ people in America over the last two years. AND we still have a long way to go to full justice and equality.

In many areas of Florida, a person can still be fired from her job or denied housing or public accommodations based on her sexual orientation, gender identity or expression! That should shock us and move us to action on behalf of the statewide nondiscrimination act for which Equality Florida and members of UCG will be lobbying.

Our work for full LGBTQ equality and non-discrimination continues on our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Equality Florida Lobby Days trip, fondly termed the "Tally Rally". Hosted by UCG's Open and Affirming Committee in coordination with Equality Florida, participants will travel overnight to Tallahassee from **Sunday, January 24 to Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup>**. There we will receive an update on the current climate of the Florida legislature, learn lobbying techniques and meet with state legislators to advocate for LGBTQ justice through appropriate legislation.

The cost per participant will be approximately \$65 which includes round-trip carpool transportation to Tallahassee on Sunday afternoon (returning Monday evening), 2-person shared hotel lodging at the Baymont Inn and Equality Florida's registration fee. The group will also share a pay-your-own meal together Sunday night. If you have questions or wish to register, contact Tim Martin, [tamartin@ufl.edu](mailto:tamartin@ufl.edu).

## Family Promise Update

We want to share our appreciation for the many volunteers that made our November 1<sup>st</sup> hosting week a great success. Thank you for providing Erin, Ariyonna and Junior a safe and friendly place to call home!! Looking ahead, our next Family Promise host week will begin Sunday, February 28, 2016. Family Promise will be at Northwest Grille (5115 NW 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue), December 7<sup>th</sup> – from 5-10pm. 10% of what you spend will be donated to Family Promise. Santa and Mrs. Claus will also be attending from 6-8pm! We hope to see you there!

**On Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup> we will be serving dinner at Grace Marketplace.** Please visit us in the courtyard throughout December to sign-up! Online signup will also be available – keep an eye out in upcoming bulletins for the link. If you have any questions about these upcoming events please contact Rebecca at [beachyg8tr@yahoo.com](mailto:beachyg8tr@yahoo.com). Thank you for your continued support and gracious hospitality for those in need here in our community!

## UCG Food 4 Kids

Mother Teresa said, "If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one." As we end the fall semester at Rawlings Elementary School, we are feeding 140 children in 57 families. We knew the need was great but never imagined how hard it is for so many children. The poverty that these children face is daunting and we are doing what we can to help until there is no longer any need to help. Thank you for your continued support.

# Worship in December <sup>12</sup>

## Advent Worship Theme: Waiting in the Wings

*All worship services include the lighting of the Advent candles*

### December 6 - Food First Food Drive

8:30am – **Meditation in the Chapel**

8:45am - **Pre-K and Elementary children report to the West Wing to get costumes and instructions for the Christmas Pageant.**

9:00am-12:30pm - **Nursery & Toddler Care**

9:15am - **Children's Christmas Pageant** - Sanctuary

10:15am - **Middle School Group** - Youth Room

10:30am - 12:30pm – **Youth United's Annual Chili & Bratwurst Lunch** - Reimer Hall

10:45am - **All-Church Band Rehearsal**—Sanctuary

11:15am - **Friendship Group** - Room 8

11:15am - **Worship** - Shelly Wilson

12:30pm - **YA UCG Lunch & Discussion** - Meet at the Fountain  
**Lessons and Carols Choir Rehearsal** - Sanctuary

### December 13 - There is no 9:15 Worship service this Sunday. All Angel Gifts & Grace Marketplace stockings are due under the tree by this evening. No Meditation this Sunday

10:45am– 12:30pm - **Nursery & Toddler Care**

11:00am – **Annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols**

*Nursery & Activity Time is available until 12:30pm.*

*There are no United Tribes or youth groups today.*

7:00pm – **Annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols**

*Child care is available from 6:00pm to 8:15pm.*

**Reception in Reimer Hall following the evening service. Please bring a finger food to share.**

### December 20

8:30am– **Meditation in the Chapel**

9:00am-12:30pm - **Nursery & Toddler Care**

9:15 & 11:15am - **Worship** - Andy Bachmann

10:15am - **Youth United & Middle School Group**—Youth Room

**Fair Trade Coffee & Chocolate sales** - Courtyard

10:30am - **Ireland Trip Information Session** - Reimer Hall

11:15am - **Friendship Group** - Room 8

### December 24 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

All services include the lighting of the Advent candles, Christmas carols, an anthem by one of our choral groups, scripture and prayers, and the lighting of candles at the end of the service in the courtyard as we sing together "Silent Night." The 7:30 and 9:30 services include a sermon by Shelly Wilson. The 9:30 service includes Communion.

**4:30pm** – a short service for families with babies, preschoolers, and younger elementary school children

**7:30pm** – a service for adults and for families with older elementary school children and teenagers

**9:30pm** – a service for adults and for families with teenagers

# Worship Cont'd

## December 27

**One Service at 10am followed by a potluck brunch.**

9:45am - 11:15am- **Nursery and Toddler care**

10:00am - **Worship "For Everything There is a Season"**- The Board of Parish Ministry (BPM) hosts this annual "end of the year" service while the ministers take a much deserved break after Christmas. We pause between the busyness of the holiday season and anticipation of the new year to focus on self-care, which enables us to receive the gifts of grace. It is through replenishment that we are also better able to care for our families and community.

10:15am - **Activity time for children**

11:00am - **Potluck Brunch** in Reimer Hall. Please bring a dish to share to Reimer Hall prior to the service.

***New Worship Theme: Rise Up***

## January 3 - Epiphany

**Food First Food Drive**

8:30am - **Meditation in the Chapel**

9:00am - 12:30 - **Nursery and Toddler care**

9:15 & 11:15am - **Worship - Vince Amlin**

9:30am - **Extended Activity Time**

10:45am - **Adult Seminar** - see below

11:00am - **Friendship Group** - Room 8

*United Tribes Church School & Youth Groups resume next Sunday, January 10*

## January 10

8:30am - **Meditation in the chapel**

9:00am - 12:30 - **Nursery and Toddler care**

9:15 & 11:15am- **Worship - Andy Bachmann**

10:15am - **Board of Children's Ministry** - Seminar A

**Visitor Coffee** - Library

11:00am - **Adult Seminar** - see below

7:00pm - **Crystal Bowl Concert** in the Sanctuary with Cindy Bergbower

## Early January Sunday Seminars

**January 3— Balanced Body, Balanced Soul** - Beginning and maintaining an exercise program can be a daunting undertaking for many of us. Yet caring for our bodies encourages a life that is rich with vitality and frees us from chronic fatigue and discomfort in turn cultivating a fertile ground to grow spiritually. Join UCG member Adam Hill, Personal Trainer, in discussion as we ask and attempt to answer important questions toward creating the right exercise plan for each of us, however known.

**January 10 - Marriage Equality: UCG Newlywed Stories** - It's been one year since marriage equality came to Florida when UCG clergy stood proudly with our members in front of the Court-house to legally marry same-gender couples. Join our diverse panel of UCG families who have married in Florida since last January 6th to hear the stories of their marriage and what that historic day has meant to them.

# DECEMBER 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<i>1</i> Contemplative Prayer* 6:00pm	<i>2</i> Council Exec 1pm YU/MSG Board & Officers 6:30pm BCM 7pm	<i>3</i> Yoga & Meditation *12pm Racial Justice Task Force 12pm FPPIDD Lunch 12pm BPM 5:30pm Lessons & Carols Rehearsal 7:15pm	<i>4</i> Morning Prayer 8am Pulitzer Book Group* 10am Women's Lunch Group Tasteful Lunch 12pm Men's Lunch Group Squirrel Pie Lunch 12pm	<i>5</i> Pageant Rehearsal 2pm Children's Christmas Craft Fair 3pm - 5pm Family Picnic Supper 5pm
<i>6</i> Christmas Pageant 9:15am Worship 11:15am All - Church Band YU Chili Lunch 10:30am Friendship Group 11:15am Lessons & Carols Rehearsal 12:30 YA Lunch 12:30pm	<i>7</i> Homeless Hats* 7pm	<i>8</i> Budget Summit 1:00pm Contemplative Prayer* 6:00pm CIA 6pm Small Groups 7pm	<i>9</i> CMRB Noon SJC 6:30pm	<i>10</i> Yoga & Meditation *12pm BoB 6:00pm Lessons & Carols Rehearsal 7:15pm	<i>11</i> Morning Prayer 8am Lunch Groups 12pm Parent's Night Out 5:00 - 9:00pm	<i>12</i> Lessons & Carols Final Rehearsal 9am
<i>13</i> Lessons & Carols Worship services 11am & 7pm Lessons & Carols Reception 8pm	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i> Contemplative Prayer* 6:00pm PFLAG 7pm Alzheimer/ Dementia Support 7pm	<i>16</i> Church Council Christmas Dinner 5:30pm	<i>17</i> Yoga & Meditation *12pm Racial Justice Task Force 12pm	<i>18</i> Morning Prayer 8am Lunch Groups 12pm	<i>19</i>
<i>20</i> Worship 9:15 & 11:15am Ireland Info Session 10:30am Friendship Group 11:15am	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i> Office Closed Christmas Eve Worship Services <b>4:30, 7:30 &amp; 9:30pm</b>	<i>25</i> Office Closed No Lunch Groups	<i>26</i>
<i>27</i> Worship - one service at 10:00am followed by a potluck brunch	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i> Dances of Universal Peace New Years Eve Celebration 7pm	Office Closed Through Jan 3rd	

# JANUARY 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 No Lunch Groups	2
	Office Closed this week					
3 Worship 9:15 & 11:15am Epiphany  Friendship Group 11:15am	4	5 BAP 7pm	6 <b>Newsletter Deadline 12pm</b>  Council Exec 1pm YU/MSG Officers 6:30pm	7 Racial Justice Task Force 12pm  FPPIDD Lunch 12pm BPM 5:30pm	8 Lunch Groups 12pm  Parent's Night Out 5:30pm	9
10 Worship 9:15 & 11:15am BCM 10:15am Visitor's Coffee 10:30am  Crystal Bowl Concert 7pm	11	12 Budget Summit 1pm  ONA 5:30pm  Small Groups 6pm  CIA 6pm	13 CMRB Noon  BOM 6pm  SJC 6:30pm	14 Newsletter Folding 10:00am  BoB 6:00pm	15 Lunch Groups 12pm	16

## Looking Ahead in 2016

- ◆ January 14-16 Youth United Mystery Trip
- ◆ Sunday, January 24 Winter Congregational Meeting
- ◆ Wednesday, February 10 Ash Wednesday. Services at noon and 7:00pm
- ◆ Thursday, February 11 New Members Orientation
- ◆ February 13 & 14 Women's Overnight
- ◆ Sunday, February 21 New Members Join
- ◆ March 11-13 "Understanding Racial Disparity in Alachua County"
- ◆ Sundays, March 13 & 20 Retreat Registration
- ◆ Sunday, March 20 Palm Sunday
- ◆ Thursday, March 24 Maundy Thursday Service
- ◆ Sunday, March 27 Easter Sunday
- ◆ Sunday, April 10 Annual UCG Book Sale
- ◆ April 15-17 All Church Retreat at Warren Willis Camp

UNITED HURCH OF  
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**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2014**  
TO COVER THE REST OF JANUARY



**CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**  
**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2015**

All three services include Christmas carols, lighting the Advent candles, reading the Christmas story, and special music. The offering at each service goes to our UCG Emergency Loan Fund which is used throughout the year to provide emergency help to UCG members and to support the Gainesville Community Ministry and Gainesville Catholic charities in their assistance to people in our community. During 2015, this offering assisted people with utility hook-ups and payments, rent, food, automobile expenses, security deposits, emergency repairs, and short-term loans.

- \* The 4:30pm service is intended for families with babies, preschoolers and younger elementary children. Each child receives a figure from the Christmas story and brings it up to create the manger scene.
- \* The 7:30pm service is intended for families with older elementary children, for families with teenagers, and for adults. This service includes a sermon and an opportunity for children to bring manger figures forward.
- \* The 9:30pm service for families with teenagers and for adults. This service includes a sermon and Communion.

All services end with a candlelight circle in the Memory Garden as we sing "Silent Night."