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Advent Small Groups

"Those Who Dream"

Advent is a remarkably short season (only 3 weeks this year), but contained within these weeks leading up to Christmas is a remarkable depth of spiritual wisdom. In these three weeks, we can marvel at the most beautiful tenets of Christian theology and connect with God in a soul-deep way. That is, we can find deep spiritual meaning in this season IF we take the time to seek for it.

As a mom, pastor, and pastor's wife, I know how extraordinarily busy this season can be. Between the to-do lists and travel plans, children's activities and church festivities, Christmas parties and shopping runs, the frantic pace of the season can threaten to overwhelm and drown out all echoes of the Divine.

I am determined to not allow the Christian message of this season to be drowned out by the noise of secular demands. Are you with me? If so, your church is here to help! If you would like to keep the spiritual meaning of Christmas central to the season, I have two invitations for you.

1. **Read along with our Daily Devotionals** written by church members and staff. You can pick up a paper copy in Crossroads or read it [online here](#).
2. **Join an Advent Small Group.** These groups will meet once a week for 3 weeks to reflect on the previous Sunday's Scripture. In these groups you'll get to know others in the church as you dive deep together into the meaning of this season. These are no-homework-required groups, so you do not need to add a thing to your to-do list. Simply arrive ready to learn from one another and listen for the voice of God. There are three small group options, listed below. [Please register here](#) for the group of your choice.

- Monday lunch on Zoom, 12-1 p.m., Dec. 4, 11, 18, led by Pastor Laura Johnson

- Tuesday morning, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Dec. 5, 12, 19, led by Phyllis Stern
- Wednesday evening, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Dec. 6, 13, 20, led by Suzanne Coats

Our theme for Advent this year is "Those Who Dream", and I challenge you to dream with me of an Advent season that is not frazzled and harried, but rather one that brings us closer to God and the Christ child we await.

-Laura Johnson
Teaching Pastor

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

**November 27-
December 24**

CHRISTMAS STORE

GIFTS DUE
December 3

AUMC ADVENT

December 3 - 25

11AM CLC WORSHIP RELAUNCH & LUNCH

December 3

NEW MEMBER CLASS

December 3

SERVICE OF HOPE & LIGHT

December 3

MONDAY MORNING

BIBLE STUDY

December 4

POINSETTIA ORDERS DUE

December 4

ADVENT SMALL GROUPS

December 4 - 20

APEX UMC HOODIE ORDER

December 10

YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 10

PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION

December 11-January 5

ENCORE CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 14

2ND ANNUAL LIGHT OF

THE WORLD FESTIVAL

December 17

GRIEFSHARE

January 7

YOUTH ENGAGED IN SERVICE

January 26-28

THIS WEEK'S CELEBRATION

Youth Friendsgiving

On November 19th, all of our youth, adult small group leaders and so many new friends came out to celebrate our annual Friendsgiving feast! With over 200 people in attendance, we shared an awesome meal and spent incredible time together playing games, making some bracelets and cards, and collecting a lot of food for Feed the Kids! You can check out some cool pictures from this event on [facebook](#) to see even more fun! If you know of any 6th -12th graders looking to find their people - we'd love for them to come join our youth fam!



-Tanner Johnson & Hailey Burroughs
Apex Youth Ministry

OFFERINGS

2024 Generosity Pledge Campaign

Your offerings help Apex UMC offer spaces that Welcome, ways to Love, and people that Serve. Please consider a pledge to Apex UMC for 2024 so we can fulfill this mission. We ask that *Offerings* Pledge Cards be submitted by **December 1**. Our collective offerings allow us to live out our mission to Welcome All. Love All. Serve All.

You can make your pledge [online](#) today!



**2024 GENEROSITY
PLEDGE CAMPAIGN**
Welcome. Love. Serve.

GENERAL

NEW 11AM CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP SERVICE

We're launching a fourth worship service this Sunday, December 3. Please share this news with friends, family and neighbors and join us for our 11:00 a.m. contemporary service launch!

PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION

Do you have a little one that is ready to start preschool? If so, we'd love to introduce you to Apex United Methodist Church Preschool! Please join us for a tour from 10:00-10:30 a.m. on December 6th to learn more about our half-day preschool program. Our registration window is quickly approaching. Registration for the 2024-2025 preschool year will be from December 11th-January 5th. Please visit [our website](#) for more details!

APEX UMC HOODIE SALE

Did you miss the first presale? Do you want a soft, warm hoodie for this winter? You're in luck! We're re-opening the order form to take more orders! Adult and Youth Sizes available, just \$25 each. Prepay on [Church Center](#) by December 10!

ZOE SOUP SALES

The ZOE team still has soup and cookie mix available for purchase! Each jar is \$12.50 and perfect for holiday gifts or enjoying at home. We have Beef, Bean, and Curried Lentil soup, and 3 jarred cookie options as well! You may purchase jars [online here](#). Thank you for your support!

ADVENT

THE CHRISTMAS STORE

Please return purchased new toys/gifts appropriate to the age and gender on the tag and place the gift under the tree with the tag attached **by December 3**. The Store will be held this year at United Church in Apex on December 8 and 9. Parents will have the opportunity to "shop" for gifts for their children from the donations we help provide. This is a great opportunity to involve your kids in a generosity lesson for the holidays. Contact Mary Morris at marymorris115@gmail.com with questions. Thank you for your generous support.

SERVICE OF HOPE & LIGHT

A Service of Hope & Light is a service to help bring hope & light to those who are struggling at this time of year. Some come because they are lonely, estranged or far from home. Others come suffering from illness or addiction or abuse. Some come who are overwhelmed with worry for loved ones or our world, grief, conflict. We are not alone. Come and rest in Hope & Light on Sunday, December 3, 4:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

POINSETTIAS

Poinsettia orders are now available for the upcoming Advent and Christmas season. Poinsettias will

be placed in our worship spaces in honor or in memory of loved ones. The deadline to place an order is **4:00 p.m. on Monday, December 4**. Plants are \$15 per dedication and will be placed in worship on Sunday, December 10. Place order on [Church Center](#) (choose quantity, add payment and then submit your dedication) or by cash/check in church office.

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL "Those Who Dream"

Go deeper this Advent season with a daily devotional booklet written by AUMC church members and staff. Psalm 126 says, "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream." What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, Joseph, the shepherds, the magi, the early church - they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God's dreams for the world, that God's Kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven. This Advent in worship and in this devotional, we will seek and sow God's dreams of hope, peace, joy, and love for our world. The devotions in this book will begin on November 27 and end on Christmas Eve. It is available in print and [online](#).

YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY

Come and celebrate the birth of Jesus with all your best friends on December 10 from 6-8 p.m. All 6-12th grade students are encouraged to come and bring a friend!

ENCORE (55+) CHRISTMAS PARTY

Join Encore on December 14 from 12-2 p.m. for a catered lunch from Smithfield's and a festive Christmas party with a fun white elephant gift exchange game. The cost for lunch is \$12 per person. Please bring a wrapped gift of an item from your home for the gift exchange game. [Register online](#).

2ND ANNUAL LIGHT OF THE WORLD FESTIVAL

Join us on Sunday, December 17 from 4:00 - 6:00 pm. Parking for those with Limited Mobility will be in the parking lot by the Fellowship Hall. Enter and exit this parking lot from Hughes St. only. Food Trucks are available from 4-6:30 p.m. We are welcoming back for your sweet tooth, Apex's own Mr. A's Beignets and for dinner Also with 'Cue Barbecue (forty percent of their monthly profit provides meals for neighbors in need.) Dining is available in Crossroads 4:00 to 6:15 p.m., purchases after 6:00 p.m. are for take home only. There will be free Hot Chocolate in Crossroads. Carnival Games and an Inflatable Slide for kids 1-99 are available 4-6 p.m. in the CLC. Take the train at Bethlehem Station in the circle. At 4:30 p.m. we will have the Nativity Story in our sanctuary with a youth orchestra and caroling. We are still in need of a few volunteers, please sign up on [Church Center](#) or contact norma.wallace@apexumc.org.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Join us to celebrate the birth of our Savior at one of our Christmas Eve services!

12 p.m. – Communion Service, Sanctuary (Traditional)

3 p.m. – Children's Services, Sanctuary and CLC

5 p.m. – Communion & Candlelight Services, Sanctuary (Traditional*) and CLC (Contemporary)

7 p.m. – Communion & Candlelight Services, Sanctuary (Traditional) and CLC (Contemporary*)

9 p.m. – Communion & Candlelight Service, Sanctuary (Traditional)

*Livestream Services on [YouTube](#)

CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION SERVERS AND GREETERS NEEDED

We are expecting thousands to join us on Christmas Eve and we need your help to welcome all with the love of Christ! We need Communion Servers and Greeters to assist in all 8 of our services.

Please [register online](#) and let us know how you can welcome, love, and serve all who join us for Christmas Eve!

www.apexumc.org/advent



CONNECT

NEW MEMBER CLASS

Are you interested in learning more about Apex UMC? Are you ready to become a member? The New Member Class on December 3 at 2 p.m. will orient you to the history, the values, and the ministries that make AUMC such a special place. This class is open to people who are curious about the church, and those who are ready to join. Childcare is available. [Register online.](#)

GRIEFSHARE

A GriefShare grief support group for people grieving the death of a loved one is starting Sun., Jan. 7, 4-5:30 p.m. At GriefShare you'll watch a weekly video with counsel and insights from respected grief experts and relatable personal stories, followed by a time of sharing and support. Session topics include what's normal in grief; how to handle difficult emotions; and what to do with regrets, questions, and worries. [Childcare](#) is provided with advanced registration. [Join the GriefShare group here](#) and reach out to Pastor Laura Johnson with questions.

SERVE

YOUTH INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE

On Sunday, December 17, youth instrumentalists in Grades 7-12 (with one full year of band or orchestra experience) are invited to participate in an instrumental ensemble to lead Christmas Carols as part of the Light of the World Festival. This ensemble will be led by Dr. Heather Duvall, band director at Apex Friendship Middle School. Youth will arrive at 3:30 p.m. for a brief rehearsal in the sanctuary before the caroling event begins at 4:30 p.m. Please [complete this form](#) if you can join us. Deadline to register is Sunday, December 3.

PENNY ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SUPPLY PARTNERSHIP

We are partnering with Penny Road Elementary to help these teachers fill in some of the gaps this school year. They need the following: New in package children's underwear and socks in any color for the following sizes: 6-16 for boys or girls. We will be collecting the items in three marked plastic tubs located in the crossroads, DC, and next to the carts in the CLC circle. If you have any questions please contact [Kara Matthews](#).

YES | Youth Engaged in Service 2024

YES is a mission project specifically for the middle school youth, open to students who will be in 6th, 7th, or 8th grades (traditional and year-round) during the 2023-2024 school year. This year, YES will be the weekend of January, 26-28. Teams of middle schoolers will partner with local non-profits during the day on Saturday to support their work. Friday evening and Sunday morning will provide opportunities for gathering and worship. Find out more and sign up [online](#).

FEED THE KIDS

FTK provides weekend meal bags for over 200 students in 11 local schools each week. They are

currently in need of individually packaged breakfasts, snacks, ramen, and canned meat. You can leave donations in the bin marked Feed the Kids in the traffic circle. If you would like to volunteer with Feed the Kids or for more information, please visit the website: feedthekidsnc.org! Thanks so much for your continued support.

WESTERN WAKE CRISIS MINISTRY (WWCM)

Current Needs: canned fruit, applesauce, pasta, pasta sauce (tomato sauce and paste), canned tomatoes, cereal, oatmeal, peanut butter, jelly, rice, boxed macaroni & cheese, flour, sugar, paper towels, toilet paper and hygiene items including feminine products. Any and all donations are appreciated! Place your donations in the bins marked WWCM outside in the Crossroads traffic circle. Your year-round support of our neighbors in need through your donations to WWCM is greatly appreciated! www.wwcm.org/donate.

GIVE

GIVING TO APEX UMC

Every time you give to Apex UMC, you are making a way for others to experience the love of God that you have experienced here. You can set up a recurring gift online, you can place your offering in the offertory plate during worship, or you can give by texting the dollar amount to 84321 and choosing Apex UMC as recipient. To find out more, [visit our website](#). Questions? Contact our [finance office](#).

GENERAL FUND OFFERINGS: July 1, 2023 – October 31, 2023

- General Fund Offerings: \$552,135
- Other Income: \$6,408
- Total Expenses: (\$653,548)
- Difference: (\$95,005)

Should it be needed, we have \$185,546 of excess revenues from the prior two fiscal years available to fund the current operations in fiscal year 2023-2024.

Deferred mortgage payments NOT included above.

As of October 31, early payments to the Forward Capital Campaign totaling \$1,226,808 have allowed us to repay the lender the total balance of the deferred amounts plus an additional \$346,705. This reduces our total debt to \$3.95 million which remains due by February 2035.

Please visit our [website](#) for more detailed information.

GIVE NOW

Interested in what is going on with our extended Apex UMC family?
Sign up to receive newsletter for [The Peak](#). For Fiesta, [visit their website](#).

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