



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

First United Methodist Church
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Making Disciples in Three Centuries

December 1, 2024
8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

“Swords Into Plowshares” by Kelly Latimore

Today we celebrate the first Sunday of Advent. It proclaims the most important news about the past and the future: Christ has come; and Christ is coming back. Just as the coming of Christ as a baby in Bethlehem took everyone by surprise, although it had long been predicted, so the coming of Christ in glory will no doubt take everyone by surprise, although it too has long been predicted. The First Sunday of Advent commemorates the longing of Israel for the Kingdom of God.

GATHERING

CHIMES *Worship begins at the opening voluntary. At the sound of the chimes, we invite you into a period of quiet reflection preparing for today's service.*

OPENING VOLUNTARY “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

Setting by Wilbur Held

GREETING

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

The prophet Isaiah calls to us from the past to imagine the future when God's reign will be fully realized and recognized throughout creation. When that time comes, God “shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4).

Today, we choose to live in hope, believing that the time of God's reign has come and is coming among us.

We light this candle of hope as a sign of our promise to follow the Light as we answer God's call to transform our hope into reality today and in the days to come. *The first candle is lit.*

† HYMN 213 “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM (11:00 a.m.)

Benjamin Tyler, child of Chris and Emily Bolin

Pastor to congregation:

Do you, as Christ's body, the church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ?
We do.

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include this family, now before you, in your care?

With God's help we will proclaim the Good News and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround this family with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their trust of God, and be found faithful in their service to others. We will pray for them that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE *All sing:*

**Benjamin Tyler, God claims you,
God helps you, protects you, and loves you too.
We this day do all agree, a child of God you'll always be.
Benjamin Tyler, God claims you,
God helps you, protects you, and loves you too.**

MINISTRY OF MUSIC (11:00 a.m.)

"An Advent Processional"

Donald Pearson

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel.
Come thou Redeemer of the earth, and manifest thy virgin birth: let every age adoring fall such birth befits the God of all. Begotten of no human will, but of the Spirit thou art still. The Word of God in flesh arrayed the promised fruit to man displayed. The virgin womb that burden gained with virgin honor all unstained; the banners there of virgin glow; God in his temple dwells below. Forth from his chamber goeth he, that royal home of purity, a giant in two-fold substance one, rejoicing now his course to run. From God the Father he proceeds, to God the Father back he speeds: his course he runs to death and hell, returning on God's throne to dwell. All laud, eternal Son, to thee whose advent sets thy people free, whom with the Father we adore, and Holy Ghost for evermore.

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Children are invited to come forward during the singing of the last verse for the children's sermon.

† HYMN 209 "Blessed Be the God of Israel"

CHILDREN'S SERMON

† PASSING OF THE PEACE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

An offering is collected to support the work of First United Methodist Church sharing God's love with the world. Please take a moment and record your attendance on a card located in the blue folders in the pews. Place the card in the offering plate when passed to you. Make a secure gift by scanning the QR Code or visit fumcbr.org/give to give online.



OFFERTORY "Who Shall Come?"

Mary Caldwell

Who shall come in the fullness of time to gladden the hearts of men? Who shall bring new joy to the world, and the poor and lonely defend? Who shall come on a cold winter's night when the world is hushed and still? Only the silent stars keep watch as a promise is fulfilled. Just as a child newly born he shall come to a stable rough with sod. 'Tis gentle Jesus, Prince of Peace, the blessed Son of God! We await him with reverent hearts. O come, Lord Jesus, come!

† DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

† PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son.
Speak to us by your Word in these Advent days, and walk with us until the day of your coming. Amen.**

† GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 24:36-44

"But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so, too, will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two will be in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken, and one will be left. ⁴² Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON "About That Day and Hour"

Reverend Whitton

SENDING FORTH

† HYMN 211 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

† BENEDICTION

CLOSING VOLUNTARY Toccata on "Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending"

Setting by James Vivian

MINISTRY OF WORSHIP

Advent Wreath	Fred and Nicki Skelton (8:30 a.m.); Eric and Ann Hogan (11:00 a.m.)
Children's Sermon	Joy Irwin
Lay Reader	Kathryn Smith (8:30 a.m.); Sue Heflin (11:00 a.m.)
Liturgist	Pattye Hewitt, <i>Executive Director of Adult Discipleship and Welcoming Ministries</i>
Musicians	Dr. Chelsey Geeting, <i>Soprano</i> Chancel Choir; Robert Brown, <i>Handbells</i> ; Sam Trevathan, <i>Percussion</i> (11:00 a.m.) Holden Miller, <i>Associate Director of Music and Organist</i> Lamar Drummonds, <i>Director of Music and Worship</i>
Preaching	Reverend Brady Whitton, <i>Senior Pastor</i>
Soundboard	Rebecca Mitchell (8:30 a.m.); Jim Hewitt (11:00 a.m.)

New to First United Methodist Church? Here's Where to Begin!

If you are new to First United Methodist and are ready to learn more or have questions, we invite you to join us for our monthly **Newcomer Coffee**. This is a great opportunity to ask questions and meet others. This event takes place on the first Sunday of each month from 9:45–10:45 a.m. in Ory Parish Hall. Registration is helpful (scan the QR code) but not required. For more information, contact Shan Schatzle, *Coordinator*, at shan@firstmethodist.org.



Café 930 - Enjoy fellowship and a cup of hot coffee or tea from 8:00-11:00 a.m. (Ory Parish Hall) every Sunday morning. An assortment of teas, flavored syrups, and sweeteners are available. All are welcome.

Families with Children – Children are always welcome in worship! Childcare is available during all services for children ages 6 weeks through Kindergarten. FUMC also offers Sunday morning groups for children and youth from 9:45-10:45 a.m. To find a group, visit the check-in table located across from the welcome desk in the Conference Center lobby.

Believe & Belong – Are you discerning becoming a member of FUMC or ready to join? Attend the next Believe & Belong on Sunday, January 25 from 9:45–10:45 a.m. in the Conference Center. Childcare and Children's Sunday School are available during this hour. Register by scanning the QR code. Questions? Email Pattye Hewitt, *Inviting & Welcoming Director*, at phewitt@firstmethodist.org.



Resource Table – Looking to grow your love for God, self, and others? Stop by the Resource Table located in the narthex off the back of the sanctuary and help yourself to a Bible and highly recommended books. These free resources will encourage and inspire you in following Jesus and loving others in his name.

Events, Missions, and Learning

Our Ministries Require Your Support: Your contributions help underwrite the important ministries of FUMC. Recurring gifts provide stability for our church, helping us know how much income to expect and to manage cash flow throughout the year. To establish a recurring gift via ACH bank draft, contact Destiny Muse, *Contributions Coordinator*, at dmuse@firstmethodist.org, or at 225-383-2777, extension 218. For instructions on setting up an online recurring gift, visit <http://www.fumcbr.org/give>.

We welcome the following persons who joined FUMC at the last *Believe & Belong*: Bryan and Joey Bunch, Dane and Lisa Graffeo, Josh and Alexis Ford, Jenny Hastings, and Keith and Laurie Smith. 110 people have joined this year.



Love Your Neighbor. Feed the Hungry.

This Giving Tuesday on December 2, First United Methodist Church of Baton Rouge invites you to respond to Jesus' call to love our neighbors and care for those in need. From **Giving Tuesday through Christmas Eve**, your gifts will help ensure that fewer people in our



Baton Rouge community face the holidays hungry.

- **The first \$10,000 received will fund holiday food boxes**, each filled with everything needed for a complete holiday meal. These boxes go directly to local individuals and families—each one a tangible expression that *God's love shows up around a table*.
- **Gifts beyond that amount will support the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank**, extending our reach so even more families experience nourishment, dignity, and hope.

On this Giving Tuesday, we ask you to give in the spirit of Jesus' mission—to feed the hungry and love our neighbors as ourselves. Your generosity is not simply an act of charity; it is an act of love and faith.

In 2026, FUMC will celebrate the **100th anniversary** of moving from the original site on the corner of Fourth and Laurel to the current location on North Boulevard. To commemorate this milestone, solid brass ornaments of the façade of the sanctuary are for sale in the Ory Parish Hall. Each ornament is \$20 (cash, check, or card accepted). This ornament will make a great gift. Purchase one for yourself, for family members who were either baptized, confirmed, or married in the sanctuary.

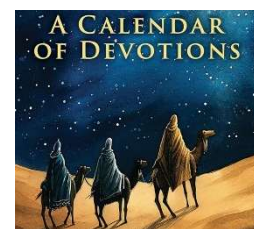


Order your poinsettia today! We hope you will consider placing a poinsettia in a worship space in memory or honor of someone special this year. By scanning the QR Code to the right, you will be directed to the poinsettia reservation page. You can also order via the Advent Section on the church's website at www.firstmethodist.org or by visiting www.fumcbr.org/poinsettia.



Each plant is \$21. The deadline to order is Monday, December 8. Poinsettias will adorn worship spaces on December 14, 21, and Christmas Eve.

"Advent 2025: A Calendar of Devotions" are available! This resource provides daily devotions to guide you through the season of Advent. Each day's reading, from the first Sunday of Advent (today) to Christmas Day, is based on the Revised Common Lectionary and includes scripture, a short devotion, and a prayer. Printed devotionals are available each sanctuary entrance. For a downloadable version or a printed copy mailed to your home, email Pattye Hewitt at phewitt@firstmethodist.org.



The FUMC Children's Ministry invites you to experience the story of Christmas as a family through activities, crafts, food, and music at **Advent Adventure** next Sunday, December 7 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. (downtown at Galvez Plaza). Visit firstmethodistchildren.org for more information about this free, family event.

Make plans to attend the **Senior Adult Christmas Event** on Wednesday, December 10. Musical entertainment will be provided by the Baton Rouge Chorus of Sweet Adelines. The program begins at 10:30 a.m. in the Conference Center. Lunch and program \$25.00. To make reservations, call (225)383-4777, ext. 229 or email care@firstmethodist.org.

Presents for the **FUMC Giving Tree** need to be returned to the Conference Center no later than December 14. Please ensure all presents are gift-wrapped and placed inside a large trash bag, clearly labeled with your child's information. Questions: contact Caroline Tyler, *Giving Tree Coordinator*, at givingtree@firstmethodist.org.

SEASON OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

The four-week liturgical season of Advent begins on Sunday, November 30. Advent derives from the Latin *adventus*, which means “coming.” The season proclaims the coming of Christ—whose birth we prepare to celebrate once again.

- December 7 Advent Adventure at 4:00 p.m.; Mid City Worship at 5:00 p.m.
- December 10 Senior Adult Program at 10:30 a.m.
- December 14 Music presented by the Chancel Choir and Festival Orchestra at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.
Music presented by the America Street Band at 9:45 a.m.
“O Come, All Ye Gumbo” at 4:30 p.m.; Downtown Christmas Pilgrimage at 5:30 p.m.
- December 20 Christmas Food boxes packing and delivery at 9:00 a.m.
- December 21 Mid City Worship at 5:00 p.m.; Longest Night Service at 7:00 p.m.
- December 24 Family Sanctuary Service at 11:00 a.m.
America Street Service at 2:00 p.m.
Sanctuary Services at 4:00 and 6:00 p.m.
- December 28 Combined Service at 10:00 a.m. No Sunday School.

Unable to join us in person for Christmas Eve worship? Online Worship Kits have everything you need to celebrate from home. Kits are available throughout the week and on Sundays at the America Street Welcome Desk and in Ory Parish Hall. Request one to be mailed to you by contacting Pattye Hewitt at phewitt@firstmethodist.org.

Looking for ways to serve during the Advent and Christmas season? To sign up, reach out to the ministry leader of the area of interest:

Missions Ministry – Ben Kennedy, bkennedy@firstmethodist.org

Load Giving Tree gifts and deliver gifts to schools – December 15, 8:00 a.m.

Unload groceries for Christmas Food Boxes – December 19, 10:00 a.m.

Pack and deliver Christmas Food Boxes – December 20, 9:00 a.m.

Hospitality Ministry – Pattye Hewitt, phewitt@firstmethodist.org

Greet at the Advent Wednesday Communion Service in Aldrich Chapel – 12:10-12:40 p.m.

Greet at the Advent Adventure at Galvez Plaza – Sunday, December 7, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Serve gumbo at “O Come, All Ye Gumbo” in the Conference Center – Sunday, December 14, 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Greet at the Downtown Pilgrimage in the Sanctuary – Sunday, December 14, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Greet at the Longest Night Service in the Sanctuary – Sunday, December 21, 7:00 p.m.

Box Cupcakes in the Dining Hall – Monday, December 22, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Greet and distribute cupcakes to children on Christmas Eve – Wednesday, December 24, 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m.