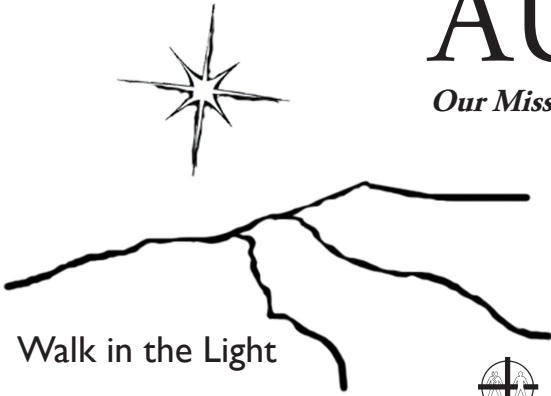


AUMC WITNESS

Our Mission: Love God, Love Neighbor, Serve the World



Walk in the Light

Vol. 9 No. 25



We are a Stephen Ministry Church

December 4, 2012

Ministers:
 Rev. Dr. Clarence R. Brown, Jr.
 Rev. Eduardo Carrillo
 Rev. Cynthia Johnson-Oliver
 Rev. Dr. Paul Y. Shin

Annandale United Methodist Church
 6935 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003
 P: 703-256-8330 F: 703-914-8896
 office@annandale-umc.org

The Advent season began at Annandale United Methodist on Dec. 2 with the beautiful "Hanging of the Greens" worship service, filling the sanctuary with voices of children, youth and adults in a traditional service of music and scripture. During the remaining three weeks until Advent, AUMC members, friends, families, and visitors are invited to participate in the preparation for Christmas by participating in the many worship, mission, study and musical programs.

St. Nick's Workshop, Saturday, Dec. 8, 12 noon. Children and their parents are invited to enjoy a light lunch, craft activities, and the story of the real Saint Nicholas. Visit the Secret Santa Shop to purchase gifts for the family.

Children's Christmas Pageant, Sunday, Dec. 9, 8:30 and 11 a.m. AUMC children will present a Christmas Pageant retelling the story of Jesus' birth with Mary and Joseph, angels, shepherds, animals and more.

Wednesday Night Together fellowship dinner and Advent Worship, Wednesday, Dec. 12. Dinner reservations are required by noon on Monday, Dec. 10, by calling 703-256-8330 or emailing jkitzmiller@annandale-umc.org. Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. and Advent Worship begins at 6:30 p.m.

Annandale High School Winter Choral Concert, Wednesday, Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Services, Monday, Dec. 24: 4 p.m. – Family Worship, with focus on children; 7 and 11 p.m. – Candlelight Communion Worship (childcare provided at 4 and 7 p.m.)

Advent and Christmas 2012
"Walk in the Light!"

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." -Isaiah 9:2a

An Evening in December – Christmas Recital, Sunday, Dec. 16, 6:30 p.m. Come and receive this special present from the Music Ministry. The sanctuary will be filled with the sounds of the season as members of the congregation share their gifts of instrumental and choral music.

Wednesday Night Together, Dec. 19 Dinner (5:45 p.m.) and **Blue Christmas** Communion Service (6:30 p.m.). Dinner reservations are required by noon on Monday, Dec. 17, by calling 703-256-8330 or emailing jkitzmiller@annandale-umc.org. Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. and Worship begins at 6:30 p.m.

The Advent Study and Sermon series continues throughout December, based on *The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem* by Adam Hamilton.

Class	Facilitator(s)	Day, Time	Room
Exploring Faith in Life	Harry Day	Sun., 9:45 a.m.	303
In His Steps	Bill Iwig	Sun., 9:45 a.m.	302
Women of the Day	Hampton/Montgomery	Sun., 9:45 a.m.	Parlor
Grace & Truth Small Groups	FitzGibbon/Mitchell/Mock	Mon., 7:00 p.m.	Parlor
Stephen Ministers	Eduardo Carrillo	1st Wed., 7:30	303
Thursday Book Study	Molly Wilmarth	Thu., 4:30 p.m.	Parlor



Honoring Mary

"Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee."

"Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

- Luke 1:28, 42

Dear Friends,

In my almost six years at AUMC, one of my most popular sermons remains "There's Something about Mary." Delivered during Advent 2009, I believe that the continued interest in this sermon reveals a growing interest, even a hunger, for more information about the mother of Jesus.

In that sermon, I contrasted Catholic and Protestant views of Mary. But in fact, Marian devotion dates back to the early church. As early as the second century, there is evidence of iconography that signified veneration of Mary. The apocryphal Infancy Gospel of James, which describes Mary's family background, early life, and betrothal to Joseph, also seems to reveal a veneration of Mary by early Christians. By the third century, Origen referred to Mary as the Theotokos, literally, God-Bearer or Mother of God. This title was confirmed by the First Council of Ephesus in 431AD.

Veneration of Mary is actually best understood as part of the doctrine of the Communion of the Saints, in which early martyrs and disciples were seen as mediators between humanity and God, interceding on behalf of those who prayed to the saints. While Catholics continue to hold this view, Protestants rejected the mediating role of the saints, arguing that Christ alone is the mediator between God and humanity.

However, did Protestant theology go too far in its rejection of Mary? Today, Mary is venerated by Catholics and virtually ignored by Protestants, except during Advent. This seems to be more than a mere rejection of the role of saints. Indeed, Protestants continue to honor Paul, John, Peter, and many other disciples, but make scant mention of Mary in liturgy, sermons, bible studies, and even theological scholarship. Many Protestant churches are named in honor of these other disciples, but rarely in honor of Mary.

Perhaps there is a middle path between Catholic Mariology and Protestant silence. This alternate view would see Mary as she was, and as other women involved in the ministry of Jesus should be seen: as disciples. The gospel writers reveal that certain women were active in the ministry of Jesus (Luke 8:2-3), present at the crucifixion (all four gospels), and the first witnesses to the resurrection (all four gospels). Mary is specifically mentioned as present at the crucifixion

(John 19:25) and is named as present with the eleven apostles in the Upper Room after the ascension (Acts 1:14), placing her at the setting of Pentecost. Indeed, if she were present at Pentecost, it would not be the first time that the Holy Spirit had come upon her.

For this reason, Mary does have an especially significant role beyond that of being a disciple. She alone, with the Holy Spirit, participates in the Incarnation, the word becoming flesh. She is the God-bearer, bearing the second person of the Trinity. She is the only person present with Jesus at his birth in the manger and his death on the cross. As a mother, how could she not be!

Finally, as an expectant mother, I can identify with Mary, especially as I anticipate giving birth during this season of Advent. In the Bible, childbirth is not always considered a blessed event. For Eve, it is considered the curse of original sin. In Levitical law, a woman is considered ritually unclean during and following menstruation and childbirth. But that which was considered a curse for Eve becomes a blessing for Mary who gives birth to Jesus, bearing the gift of salvation to all mothers, sons, and daughters thereafter.

Thus, Mary is worthy of honor for the reasons mentioned by the angel Gabriel and by Elizabeth in what is now known as the "Hail Mary" prayer. By honoring Mary, we honor her role in the Incarnation, we acknowledge her presence, with other women, in the ministry of Jesus, and we celebrate the grace bestowed upon her: an ordinary mother who found extraordinary favor with God.

Blessings.

Cynthia Johnson-Oliver

Rev. Cynthia Johnson-Oliver

DATEBOOK

Thursday, Dec. 6, 5-7 p.m., food distribution at Immanuel campus, 7901 Heritage Drive. Contact: Betsy Clevenger, 703-425-6424.

Sunday, Dec. 8, noon – 2 p.m., St. Nick's Workshop, Wright Hall.

Sunday, Dec. 9, 8:30 and 11 a.m., Children's Christmas Pageant.

Wednesdays, Dec. 12 and 19, 5:45 p.m., Wednesday Night Together Dinner followed by Advent Communion Service (6:30 p.m.) Reservations for dinner due by previous Monday. Call 703-256-8330 or email jkiztmiller@annandale-umc.org or make a note on the pew pad Sunday mornings.

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m., Annandale High School choral concert, sanctuary.

Sunday, Dec. 16, 6:30 p.m., An Evening in December concert, presented by AUMC Music Ministry.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Thank You Dr. Shin: After more than 17 years of dedicated and distinguished service as Annandale UMC's Korean Pastor, Dr. Paul Shin has announced his retirement effective Dec. 31. Dr. Shin has been a tremendous gift to AUMC as he has shared his love of Jesus with the Korean congregation. He has also been a steady presence at Evergreen House. He will be greatly missed! Expressions of thanks and appreciation for Dr. Shin's many contributions may be made with a cash "love gift" to Dr. Shin. Place gift in an envelope labeled "love gift for Dr. Shin" in the worship offering plate by Dec. 23 or send to the church office by Dec. 30.

Donate It

Finance Office Reminders: All gifts to be credited for 2012 tax purposes must be received in the church office by 11:30 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 31, or postmarked by Monday, Dec. 31. If you are responsible for expense vouchers for your work area, vouchers must be submitted on or before Wednesday, Dec. 19.

Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church welcomes donations for 350 Christmas baskets to be distributed later this month to neighbors in need. Donations of food are needed by Monday, Dec. 17, and donations of funds to purchase the food are due Dec. 11. (Make checks payable to Rising Hope.) Donations can be taken or mailed to Rising Hope, 8220 Russell Road, Alexandria, VA 22309. Food items needed are: chicken, turkey and ham, jarred gravy, chicken broth, stuffing, mac n' cheese/pasta, canned fruit, canned vegetables, boxed desserts. For more information contact Sarah at 703-360-1976 or sheckman@risinghopeumc.org .

Contribute to "Stamp Out Loneliness": Caring Ministries is collecting 2013 picture calendars, note cards, writing paper and "Forever" postage stamps for women incarcerated in the Fluvanna Correctional Center, Virginia. To a woman in prison, a stamp can be a "lifeline" to her children, family and friends far away. Bring calendars, un-used cards, paper and stamps to the collection box outside of the church office. Please give postage stamps to the office staff.

Searching for a Special Gift? Visit the Children's Ministry's Living Gift Market Sunday mornings, Dec. 9 and 16. Honor someone in your life by giving a gift of an animal through Heifer Project International to help a hungry family feed themselves.

Buy It

Little White Church ornaments (\$25) and notecards (\$10) can be purchased in the church office. Please pay exact amount in cash or by check payable to AUMC.

Christmas Wreath Sale: Boy Scout Troop 150 is selling Christmas wreaths before and after Sunday services. Cost is \$20 each; two or more for \$18 each. The 22" noble fir wreath comes with pinecone decorations and a large velvet bow.

Pecan Sale: UMW is selling a new crop of pecans after each Sunday worship service. To reserve a case of 24, or to make a special request, contact Joni Laurence at 703-941-7481, Sally Bizer at 703-256-3373 or Evie Gibson at 703-256-2905. Thank you for supporting UMW mission projects.

Do It

AUMC's New Member Class will be held on Friday, Dec. 5, 7-9 p.m., in room 209. The class is called "Brownie Evenings with Brown" and will be taught by Rev. Dr. Clarence Brown, Jr.. It is a time of exploration and discernment of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ at Annandale UMC. Topics will range from Wesleyan Theology to United Methodism 101; from Stewardship to Spiritual Gifts. Pre-registration is not necessary. For more information, call 703-256-8330. New members will be received at worship on Sunday, Dec. 16.

Day Trip to Old Town, Alexandria, sponsored by the Shepherd's Center on Dec. 12 will leave at 10 a.m. from AUMC. Cost \$12. For more information call SCAS at 703-941-1419.

 **Visit us on facebook!** Facebook.com/pages/Annandale-united-methodist-church-virginia.

Teams Forming to Prepare Meals: 4 teams of 4 -5 people are needed to provide dinner for 150 students at Poe Middle School one Wednesday a month, beginning in January. Serving time is between 4:30 and 5 p.m. Volunteers are needed to create a menu, shop for ingredients, prepare food, serve the meal, and clean up. Funds are available to cover costs. For more information, contact Molly Wilmarth molly.wilmarth@yahoo.com, 703-474-3281 or Betsy Clevenger, 703-425-6424.

Sunday Morning Opportunities: Adults and/or children are needed to serve as acolytes, crucifers and ushers for Sunday morning worship. If you are interested, please contact Joyce Kitzmiller, jkitzmiller@annandale-umc.org or 703-256-8330.

A Personal Care Aide Training Program is being offered at Arlington United Methodist Church Tuesdays and Saturdays beginning in February. The class costs \$250 plus textbooks, CPR training and the nurse kit. For more information contact Ana Maria Lopez at 703-979-7527 or AnaMariaL869@gmail.com.

MINISTRY MEETINGS

Tues., Dec. 4	Trustees	7:30 p.m.	Room 303
Wed., Dec. 5	Stephen Ministry	7 p.m.	Room 210
Tues., Dec. 11	Finance Committee	7 p.m.	Room 210
Tues., Dec. 11	Missions Committee	7 p.m.	Room 302

LECTIONARY TEXTS

Dec. 9, Second Sunday of Advent: Malachi 3:1-4, Luke 1:68-79 (UMH 208), 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13, Luke 21:25-36

Dec. 16, Third Sunday of Advent: Zephaniah 3:14-20, Isaiah 12:2-6, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:7-18

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Send address changes to:

Annandale United Methodist Church

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WEEKLY VOLUNTEERS

Sunday, Dec. 9

Outreach greeters: 8:30 a.m. E. Wilson/C. Cox 9:30 a.m. M. Pearson,
10:30 a.m. W. Ward

Greeters: Youth

Fellowship hosts: Phoebe/Lydia Circles

Ushers: 8:30 a.m. A. Cogswell, S. Fleming, D. Pemberton, S. Nkesi (c)
11 a.m. S. Fleming, C. Perdue, R. Witkowski, P. Adams (c)

Sunday, Dec. 16

Outreach greeters 8:30 a.m. R. Hampton, 9:30 B. Brown,
10:30 a.m. – L. McConville/E. Moss

Greeters: KAIROS Prison Ministry

Fellowship hosts: Witness/Missions Committee

Ushers: 8:30 a.m. S. Chase, G. Sherfey, P. Sherfey, E. McKenney (c)
11 a.m. G. Sherwood, P. Straub, P. Snitzer, R. Gordon (c)

NEXT DEADLINE

Friday, Dec. 7 is the deadline for the Dec. 18
Witness which covers Dec. 23 and 30

Thank you to all of you who supported our Nov. 8 – 11 Kairos Prison Ministry program with your cookies and prayers. You are vital partners in this program to the men at Greenville Regional Correctional Center who know very little of God's love and forgiveness. Your cookies and prayers are appreciated very much.

Thank you to all parents, children and volunteers involved with the Christmas Pageant and St. Nick's Workshop. We couldn't do it without you!

POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS

To place a poinsettia in the sanctuary in honor or memory of a loved one on Dec. 23, please complete the form below and return it to the church office with your check for \$10.50 per plant **by Sunday, Dec. 16!** **Please use a separate form for each plant ordered!**

No telephone orders will be accepted.

Make checks payable to AUMC.

Poinsettia given by: _____

Phone: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

In memory/honor of: _____

(Check one) I will take poinsettia

Give poinsettia to shut-ins

Virginia Advocate Subscriptions

Read the Advocate each month to stay informed about mission opportunities around the world, ideas for ministry, stories of faith and discipleship and much more. Complete the form below and attach your check payable to AUMC. Place in the offering plate or send to the church office.

YES, I want to join the conversation...

(Please check appropriate boxes and enclose payment)

Enter my new subscription to the VA Advocate.

Renew my subscription to the VA Advocate.

Payment enclosed for \$15 (1 year).

Payment enclosed for \$25 (2 years, SAVE \$5).

Payment enclosed for \$36 (3 years, SAVE \$9).

Online subscription for \$10.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Place this completed form and payment in the offering plate or return to the church office. Checks should be made payable to AUMC and earmarked "Virginia Advocate."