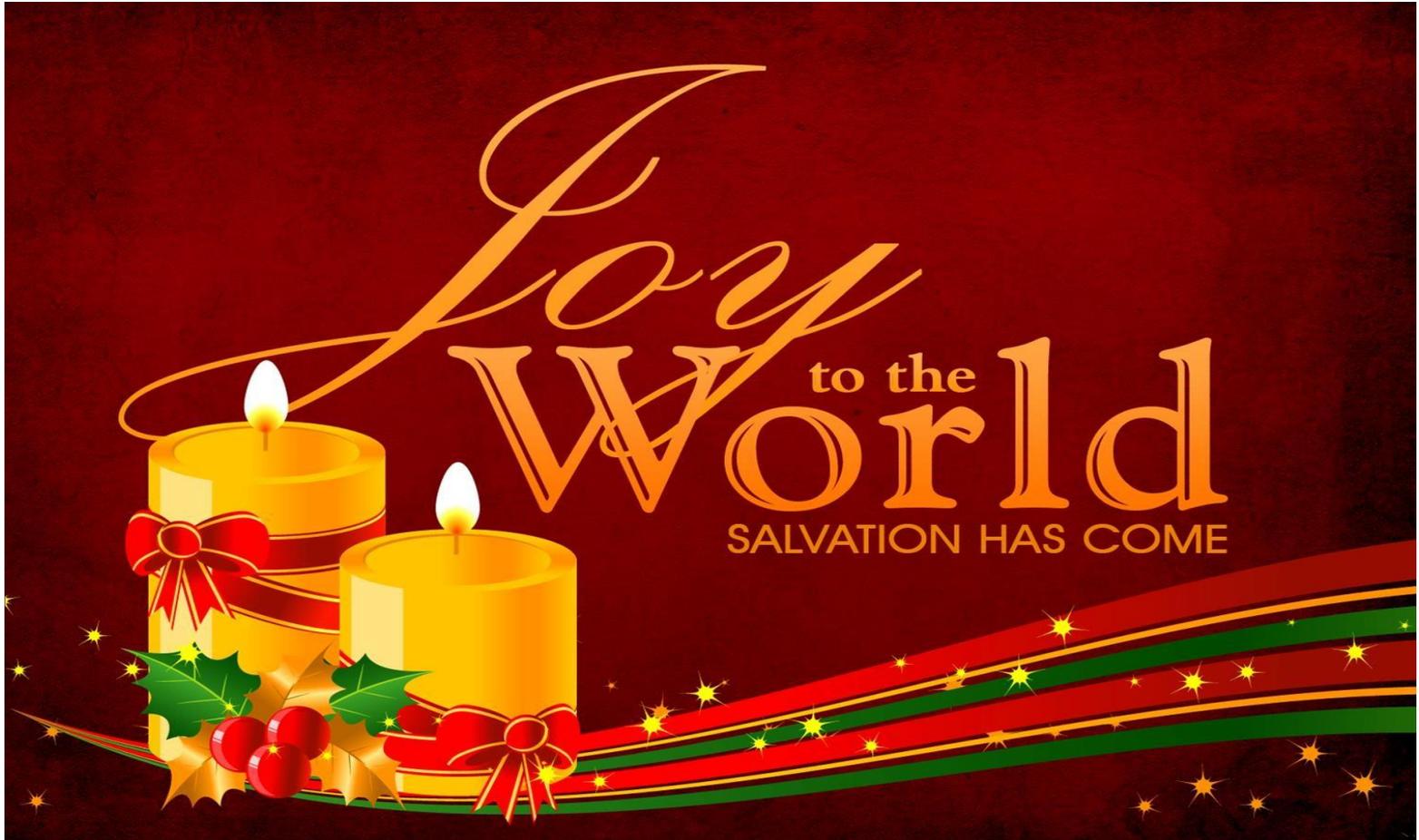


# Shepherd's Voice

## December 2021



### Happy Birthday

John D	9 <sup>th</sup>	Ava Rose	23 <sup>rd</sup>
Jane C	15 <sup>th</sup>	Claire S.	24 <sup>th</sup>
Daniel S	15 <sup>th</sup>	Deb G	26 <sup>th</sup>
Tom M	19 <sup>th</sup>	Nikki F	28 <sup>th</sup>
Wanda C	20 <sup>th</sup>	Lynn O	30 <sup>th</sup>
Kathy A	23 <sup>rd</sup>		

### Happy Anniversary

Clara and Srinivasan	14 <sup>th</sup>
Femi and Tinu	23 <sup>rd</sup>
Tom and Suzanne	29 <sup>th</sup>



October 2021 Jan-Oct 2021

Expense:	\$6,950.86	\$73,020.44
Income:	\$7,854.00	\$85,518.94
Total:	\$903.14	\$12,498.50

## UMOM Winter Coat Drive

It's not too early to plan for chilly winter temperatures!

UMOM will need *clean* gently used (no repairs needed) coats and jackets in all sizes, from toddler to adult XXL. New coats are always appreciated too! UMOM websites post links to Amazon, Target, and Walmart wish lists. Donations can be brought to church on Sunday, or dropped off during open office hours. Have a large amount of clothing and coats for donation? Please contact Suzanne Shaw for a pickup right at your home!

## Upcoming Events

- We are updating our directory information. Please correct and return the paper you receive. Even if there are no corrections, please initial and return it anyway.
- Fun Friday: Bingo Night January 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.
- We are adopting a family from Lakeview Elementary. It is a family of 4 including a 10 yr old girl, a 14 yr old boy and a 16 yr old boy. If you would like to contribute, there will be gift tags in the lobby to pick up or you can see Randal, Nicki, or Pastor Janet.
- The Martha's Circle Craft and Bake and Craft Sale will be Dec 12<sup>th</sup> Before and after Church Service.



-Christmas Eve is Open Your Heart's Door to God's Love For You. December 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm.

- If you are considering a year end gift to the church, please label the envelope as such. The entire Christmas Eve offering will be donated.

**Write on the envelope: Christmas Eve offering donated to \_\_\_\_\_.**

A SEASON  
OF  
WONDER



Dear Shepherd of the Valley Family,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As we prepare for Christmas this year, we are mindful of the way things have changed over the past year and a half. It is rare for a day to go by without hearing or thinking about the Coronavirus. Due to its effects, we have mourned the loss of loved ones as well as the loss of time spent with those we care about as we attempt to prevent exposure to the disease. Interesting word, dis-ease. The prefix, dis, means “apart.” Ease is associated with comfort. Therefore dis-ease means we are apart from comfort. Miriam-Webster has a Word History article on The History of ‘Disease’ which goes into more detail of the word, but I simply wanted to comment on it. We had hoped that things would be back to “normal” by now. Because of the protection the vaccine provides, many of us assess our risk to be lower and we have resumed more normal activity, but we are still feeling apart from comfort.

This uncomfortable feeling follows us into the Christmas season. In the 21st century it is challenging enough to see through the hustle and bustle and the glitz and glamor our society associates with Christmas. We are uneasy and our hearts long to rest in the hope and comfort of our savior. It is my hope that our Advent series will help us to do that. Let’s focus on this Advent season as “A Season of Wonder.” Despite the chaos around them, let’s look at how some of the people in the Bible responded to the wonder associated with the birth of Jesus.

Do you ever wish to be a child again at Christmastime? How wonderful to behold the season with a fresh mind and a young heart! As adults, we long to experience the anticipation and excitement we see sparkling in little eyes. We want to hear the age-old account of God’s greatest gift and sacrifice as if for the first time—and we hope it will touch our hearts. And why not? Why shouldn’t the Advent season be filled with awe and mystery and excitement? It can be, if only we open our hearts in childlike wonder to all that this holy time offers. This is the secret of a child at Christmas: a heart’s door perpetually open to wonder, expecting the touch of God him-self. Children remember that Christmastime is the time for miracles. After all, it’s the celebration of God’s reaching out to the world he loves, through the birth of his own Son, Jesus Christ.

So, how do we open our hearts to the wonder of Christmastime? How can we find a suitable mix of activity and contemplation, fun and reverence? How can we prepare and prioritize so our hearts are open to a celebration that touches us at a deep soul-level? This Seasonal Advent Celebration provides the answers! The following themes, at the core of “A Season of Wonder,” are designed to help us open our heart’s doors to all the excitement and amazement this season has to offer. We’ll learn to open the door to: God’s plans; to friends and strangers; to silence and song; to divine encounters; to new opportunities; and—most importantly—to God’s love for us. For when your heart is open and God’s love enters in, it’s not only Christmas that becomes a season of wonder, but every season of the year.

To help us open these doors and experience this season of wonder, I will be hosting a Zoom meeting that you can join on the computer or by phone every day except for Sunday. We will read scripture and devotions and discuss what we have read. I’m looking forward to this time of learning and growing together as we experience this Season of Wonder.

May God Bless You and Your Loved Ones in WONDER- FILLED Ways This Christmas!  
Peace & Love, Pastor Janet

The Wesley Prayer Challenge: 21 Days to a Closer Walk with Christ

## There will be a Book Study with Pastor Janet

- By [Chris Folmsbee](#) \$12.99 (More info to come on ordering books)

Classes Wednesday Evenings 6:30 - 8:00. 4 weeks. Introductory class January 5th. Reading challenge begins January 6th.

Renew your passion for prayer in just 21 Days with the Wesley Prayer Challenge.

The Wesley Covenant Prayer has been used in Methodist services around the world on the first Sunday of the year since John Wesley introduced it in 1755. Wesley expected that people would pray this prayer as a way of remembering, renewing, and surrendering themselves in complete trust to God. In *The Wesley Prayer Challenge*, author Chris Folmsbee invites readers to consider words from the Wesley Covenant Prayer each day for three weeks, while reflecting on their meaning in the context of the larger piece.

### - Covid-19 Plan Update

We use the numbers on [Covidactnow.org](#) to follow risk levels. These numbers refer to the number of daily new cases per 100,000 residents.

For a few months, we have been seeing numbers in the middle of the **CRITICAL** range, (this week at about 54) but the trend is that the numbers are increasing.

These are the criteria for the various risk levels:

75+ cases **EXTREME**

1 - 9 cases **MEDIUM**

25 - 74 cases **CRITICAL**

0 cases **LOW**

10 - 24 cases **HIGH**

Our plan is to **continue the practices we have in place unless numbers move into the **EXTREME** range.**

Going forward, **we will assess the numbers every Wednesday to determine our course of action for Sunday.**

If the numbers move into the **EXTREME** range, **we will offer livestream only** with just the worship team in the sanctuary: (Janet, Trina, Erik and a possibly a liturgist)

### LBBW Alley Clean Up:

The Lake Biltmore Block Watch leaders organized a great event Saturday 11/20/21! Neighborhood Services arranged for a dumpster and trailer loaded with shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows, trash bags, rolling magnet to pick up nails, and anything needed. LBBW supplied donuts, snacks, and cold water. Pick up trucks delivered supplies to the volunteers and picked up the filled trash bags to be taken to the dumpster. Officer Ortiz keep his eyes on us and contacted any alley dwellers. There were youth volunteers from Cholla Middle School and Moon Valley High School as well as our neighbors. It was a great turn out! The entire mile of alley was picked up and raked in under 3 hours. It looks wonderful! Thank you to Lake Biltmore Block Watch! Their next meeting is Tuesday December 14 at 6:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Thank You

A big thank you to those who helped decorate the Sanctuary after church Sunday! Although the transformation will continue over the next few weeks, the heavy work was accomplished.

# December 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
			9:00 am Advent Devotion 1:30 pm - Prayer Group, zoom	9:00 am Advent Devotion 8:00 pm Men's AA, FH	9:00 am Advent Devotion	9:00 am Advent Devotion 10:00 am Janice Stemler's Memorial Service
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9:00 am Advent Devotion Worship 10:30 am Worship On-Line Any Time	9:00 am Advent Devotion	9:00 am Advent Devotion	9:00 am Advent Devotion 1:30 pm - Prayer Group, zoom	9:00 am Advent Devotion 10:30 pm Martha Circle, rm1 8:00 pm Men's AA, FH	9:00 am Advent Devotion	9:00 am Advent Devotion
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9:00 am Advent Devotion Worship 10:30 am Worship On-Line Any Time Craft & Bake Sale	9:00 am Advent Devotion 5:30 pm Girl Scouts, FH	9:00 am Advent Devotion 6:30 pm Biltmore Block Watch meeting FH	9:00 am Advent Devotion 1:30 pm - Prayer Group, zoom	9:00 am Advent Devotion 10:30 am Martha Circle, rm1 8:00 pm Men's AA, FH	9:00 am Advent Devotion	9:00 am Advent Devotion
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9:00 am Advent Devotion Worship 10:30 am Worship On-Line Any Time	9:00 am Advent Devotion	9:00 am Advent Devotion	9:00 am Advent Devotion 1:30 pm - Prayer Group, zoom	9:00 am Advent Devotion 8:00 pm Men's AA, FH	9:00 am Advent Devotion Christmas Eve Service 4 pm	Merry Christmas
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Worship 10:30 am Worship On-Line Any Time	9:00 am Advent Devotion 5:30 pm Girl Scouts, FH	9:00 am Advent Devotion	9:00 am Advent Devotion 1:30 pm - Prayer Group, zoom	9:00 am Advent Devotion 8:00 pm Men's AA, FH		

2	3	NOTES
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Worship has now restarted in the Sanctuary Masking and Social Distancing are required.  
We hope to see YOU soon!

Dear Shepherd of the Valley,

I'm excited to begin our daily devotional time exploring this "Season of Wonder" together. Please call or join our meeting as explained below.

We are doing a trial run tomorrow morning, Saturday November 27th at 9:00.

On Monday November 29th we will be up and running for a brief time of scripture study and conversation each day (except for Sundays).

Please join in on days that your schedule allows. We will be happy to fellowship with you whenever we can.

This is one way that you can open your heart's door to the wonder and miracle of Christ's birth.

I hope to see or hear you on Zoom soon!

Wonder and Peace Be With You!

Pastor Janet

SOVUMC is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Advent Devotional Daily at 9:00 am

Join Zoom Meeting: [zoom link](#)

or call (602)753-0140 (Phoenix) and enter meeting id and pass code when prompted.

Meeting ID: 916 6208 5500

Passcode: 667714

**Shepherd of the Valley UMC**

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**602-942-9288**

**Pastor Janet Culbertson**

**sov@sovumc.phxcoxmail.com**

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**Bishop Grant Haglya, Interim UMC Bishop**

**Reverend Javier Olivares, District**

**Superintendent**