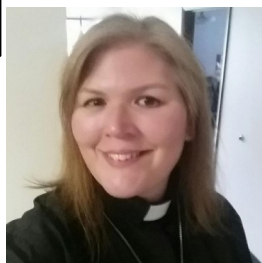


Caring & Sharing

Vangie's Voice

*"Like a shepherd you feed your flock,
gathering the lambs and holding them close,
and leading mother ewes with gentleness."*

— Isaiah 40:11, The Inclusive Bible



Advent and Christmas are here again! For some of you, the lights, carols, goodies, trees, and other festive objects bring comfort and joy. For others, it could bring a tinge of sorrow. The dark nights could bring up feelings of loneliness. The worries of the increasing cost of just about everything pull us away from joyful "Fa-la-las". The world at war, climate change, and economic disparities can make holiday cheer feel elusive.

We recently finished the series called "Come to the Table". We reminded ourselves of how God feeds us, invites us, and gives us grace to practice good things.

We came to God's table...now what?

Now we consider the Gift of Being Present!

We people called Methodists have a rich theology about process and growth. Process implies that an amount of waiting is necessary. Advent is a season of waiting for the Light of the world to be born.

From our friends at Worship Design Studios, they write:

Advent can be filled with worry about finding the perfect Christmas gifts. Deep down we want people in our lives to know they are special and that we love them. But sometimes we overlook the greatest gift of all... our very presence. Our spiritual ancestors were also worried — often about survival in the midst of political occupation. And the response of the scriptures is "the Holy Living One is with you." Like a shepherd who never leaves the flock, we are held close. This season, we are invited to be the gift of presence for our loved ones, for our communities, for those who need it most.

What present do we have to bring? Whether we are strapped for cash this year or on the verge of burnout, I'd like you to consider the final verse of the Christmas carol "In the Bleak Midwinter":

*What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.
--UMH 221, verse 4*

The message of Christmas is that God's presence can be manifest through us with the help of the Spirit. We get to "Go, tell it on the mountain" and proclaim the assurance of hope, peace, joy, and love to those who need it (which is all of us). Let us bring our presence to each other and to God. This gift of being present is priceless.

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Inside this issue:

Pastor Golden Neal	2
Centralia College Concerts	2
Sermons Titles/Texts	3
Crest to Coast Learning Hub Events	4
Birthdays	4
The Art of Being Present Study	4
Rochester Events	4



Open Hearts.
Open Minds.
Open Doors.

**The people
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YOUTH UPDATE



Since our last newsletter, our youth group has grown. Some have departed and others have invited their classmates to participate in our program. The youth seem to appreciate our willingness to be there when sometimes they are not. One of our challenges is helping them to be consistent with their attendance. Our program focus is to introduce them to Jesus Christ and the values of the church. This is accomplished through group discussion over dinner, faith-based projects, and worship. Another focus of the program is to help the youth mature to be the best versions of themselves. They seem reluctant to socialize outside of their small group and we had no attendees at the district youth overnighter at First United Methodist

Church of Olympia. Twenty youth from the district were in attendance. We hope to build their confidence to socialize and develop their leadership skills. They are slowly assuming more responsibility for our weekly meetings. Highlights of our fall season were to introduce the youth to All Saints Day celebration. The youth made memorial pumpkins (Styrofoam) to remember a loved one that has died. The pumpkins were incorporated into the Sunday worship display as we remembered our loved ones. The youth were encouraged to wear costumes to a "Redeemer's Ball" where they partied at first, entered into worship, and ended by serving each other dessert & cider. We celebrated the graduation of Brisa Villasenor from Rochester High School. Brisa and her family attended worship and received graduation gifts and blessings from the congregation. After Thanksgiving, we will plan for December activities. Hopefully, the youth will be engaged in the Blue Christmas (Longest Night) worship service. We will also be looking at issues of power and justice using a popular Christmas theme.

In the beginning of the year there will be a renewed focus on preparing the youth for summer camp. I just returned from the renovated Madrona Lodge at Camp Indianola. The renovation includes furniture from The Great Wolf Lodge, private amenities, and an expansive new deck overlooking Puget Sound. May the blessings of Christ be with you all.

—**Pastor Golden Neal, youth pastor**

Rev. Neal can be contacted at abundant_life11@hotmail.com

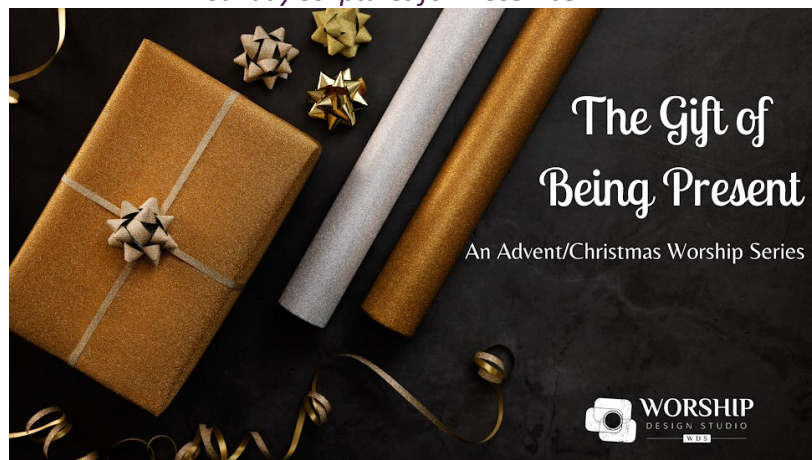


Centralia Community College Winter Music Festival Corbet Theater

Monday, December 4 at 7 pm: Pacific Northwest Chamber Orchestra
Thursday, December 7 at 7 pm: Centralia College Choir

Come see Carol Mason, Cedar Conley, and Leah Wegener as they join the Centralia Community College Choir and Orchestra to celebrate this winter season.

Sunday Scriptures for December



**December 3 Ad-
Present with Hope**

Psalm 80: 1-2, 1 Corinthians 1: 4-7, Mark 13: 24-37

Advent One: Being

December 10 Advent Two: Being Present with Peace

Isaiah 40: 1-11 and 2 Peter 3: 8-15a, Mark 1: 1-8

December 17 Advent Three: Being Present with Joy

Isaiah 61: 1-4; 10 and Psalm 126: 1-3, Luke 1: 41-55

A CONNEXIONAL CHRISTMAS

These services will be with both congregations combined

December 24 11:00 a.m. @ Rochester UMC

Advent Four: Being Present with Love

2 Samuel 7: 1-11 and Psalm 89: 1-4, Luke 1: 26-38

Christmas Eve: Being Present with Light 4:00 P.M. @ Centralia

Isaiah 9: 2-8, excerpts; Luke 2: 1-14, (15-20)

December 31 Christmas Season: Being Present with Assurance

Connexional Sunday :**Centralia UMC @ 11:00 a.m.**

Isaiah 62: 1-3, Galatians 4: 4-7, Luke 2: 22-40

Help make Sundays more meaningful by signing up as a liturgist!! Sign up is by our front door.



Dec. 3	Margie Joy Murray
Dec. 11	Sandy Rydell Karina Villasenor
Dec. 27	Don Brown
Dec. 29	Jacob Wegener

What's Happening at RUMC?

- Dec 8 & Jan 12: Anywhere Library @ RUMC 11:30 am- 12:30pm
 - Dec 13: Area Agency on Aging resource specialist 11:00-11:30 am
 - Dec 14: RUMC Admin Board 4pm at the church
 - Dec 1-2, 8-9, 15-16 Thrift Shop open 10am-2pm
- T.O.P.S. meets every Thurs @ 9am
RUMC Youth meets every Wed. @ 5pm
Senior Lunches Wed and Fri 11-11:30 am

Advent Wednesday Zoom Study

The Art of Being Present


Wednesdays @ 2:00p.m.
Starting December 6th

Cultivate Goodness by paying attention

Based on this book on Christian mindfulness

on Zoom at
<https://greaternw.zoom.us/j/91869678660>

Please purchase book in advance or contact Pastor for a copy



The Art of Being Present

Our Wednesday afternoon small group returns for Advent on December 6th at 2:00 p.m. We will learn about and practice the ancient (yet very modern)

ways of Christian Mindfulness. We will read the book by Amy Oden called "Right Here, Right Now: The Practice of Christian Mindfulness". This book is available for purchase on Amazon here: <https://a.co/d/cuX8yk5> or Contact Pastor Vangie or the Centralia church office if you need a copy. We have about 5 copies coming in the mail and would appreciate \$12 donated for a copy. If costs are prohibitive, we will gladly give it to you for free. Digital study guides will be available online soon. Please let us know in advance if you'd like a paper copy.

Pastor's Office Hours

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Wednesday: Centralia
Thursday: Centralia
Friday : Rochester
Saturday: Rochester

Note: The schedule changes according to other responsibilities, such as duties for the PNW conference or Continuing Education.

Book a time with the pastor by calling the office, sending an email, or through Calendly: <https://calendly.com/pastorvangierand/chattingwithpastorv>

*** Please note: If you have any information that needs to get into the newsletter, any events that need to be announced, the deadline for the January newsletter is **Wednesday, December 20**. Please have your information to the office by then, thanks!
(You can email the office at centra-liafirstumc@gmail.com or call)



Crest to Coast Learning HUB Events 2023/2024

NOVEMBER	28	Greg Clensy What can local churches learn from our UM Camps about connecting with young people? Come get to know the new Ocean Park Camp and Retreat Center Director, Greg Clensy, and hear how the Camp's ministry can impact our local church ministry.
JANUARY	23	Rev. Cruz-Edwin Santos This month our guest will be Rev. Cruz Edwin Santos, Director of Hispanic/Latino Ministry who will speak on Hispanic Ministry in the PNW Conference.
FEBRUARY	27	Rev. Wendy Woodworth This month our guest is Rev. Wendy Woodworth District Superintendent to the Oregon Idaho Conference. Join us as she discusses Lay-led Creative Sermon Time.
MARCH	26	Rev. Gregg Sealey, CPCC, PCC This month our guest is Rev. Gregg Sealey, of Gregg Sealey Coaching and Consulting. Join us as Gregg leads us in a workshop exploring meditation and mindfulness for leaders.
APRIL	23	Rev. Byron Harris & Dana Smothers Join us as Rev. Byron Harris and Dana Smothers discuss the process by which their congregation decided to engage in an equity audit and examine how they gained support of the entire congregation and what was their logistical process.
MAY	28	Topic TBD

Join us for one or all of these informative Learning Hub events. Each event is held on Zoom from 4-5 pm. Have questions or a topic suggestion? Email us at c2cds@pnwumc.org.

Register at: <https://gnw-reg.brtapp.com/C2CLearningHubEvent>