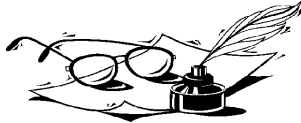




Corner of Beaver & Burrowes



# A-B NEWSLETTER

• ALBRIGHT-BETHUNE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH •

**Rev. Paul R. McReynolds, Pastor**

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Blannie Bowen, Editor; Volume 27, Number 12, December 2020

## *From Pastor Paul's Desk.....*

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Healer of the Soul, and our everlasting Redeemer. I am so excited about what the Lord has in store for us at Albright-Bethune. We have an amazing opportunity to be a bridge in the community by mending their souls with the word. Engaging their hearts in stewardship and prayer. All of this is done by a Beloved Community engaging in planting the seeds of Jesus Christ, our Hope. Building Bridges of connections throughout the community. (Matthew 25:34-36, Luke 4:18-19)

Hello everyone. I pray all is well with each of you! We have entered one of my favorite seasons of the year, Christmas. "Christmas time is here. Happiness and cheer. Fun for all that children call. Their favorite time of the year." I have to listen to this song every year on the first of December. This song takes to me through a tapestry of memories of Christmas time. From my first time ministering to youth and young adults at our District youth retreat in Palms Springs at 15 years old. To doing community outreach with my high school choir. Many of you have your favorite songs for this time of the year. I invite you for a moment to listen to that song and take in those memories and cherish them.

I know for many of us this Christmas season will be different because of the times we are in. In the midst of all we have faced from March until now, the Lord has been with us. The Lord is watching over us and is protecting each of us along this journey we are all walking on together. Isaiah 9:6-7 says, "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

As we face this month and move into the new year, know that we have a counselor and the bringer of Peace. I ask that each of you please remain vigilant and protect yourselves as doctors and scientists say this month will be a difficult one. I want to say that I love you all and I am praying for you. Be blessed, Family.

Jesus, the Prince of Peace, that's who we need at this moment. You are the lifter of our heads. I ask that you be with us and guide us through this time we have never witnessed before. Lord, be our light in a time of darkness. Lord, as we enter into your season of remembrance and reconciliation, I want to say thank you for the Hope you brought us through your Son, Jesus of Nazareth. Lord, be our strength and our shield. We say this in your Jesus name we pray. Amen!!

- **Pastor Paul Ryan McReynolds**

- **C**HRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - Our Albright-Bethune Christmas Eve service will be held virtually at 6 p.m. on Thursday, December 24. Also, we will have our regular worship service on Sunday, December 27. Please plan to participate in both services to celebrate the birth of Jesus.
- **B**IRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES - Congratulations to these individuals who celebrate special days this month: December 7 – **Harriet Nembhard's** Birthday; December 13 – **Rev. Dr. Pamela Ford's** Birthday; December 18 – **Shannon Holliday's** Birthday; December 19 – **Carl Ector's** Birthday; December 23 - **Carla Roser Jones'** Birthday; December 24 – **Ebun Adewumi's** Birthday; and December 29 – **Ajane' Holliday's** Birthday. Give Blannie your special dates (call/text 814-777-6550 or email [blanniebowen@gmail.com](mailto:blanniebowen@gmail.com) ) so we can honor you on your special dates.
- **N**O IN-PERSON WORSHIP & GATHERINGS - As the deaths and infections from COVID 19 continue to escalate, on November 30 Bishop Jeremiah Park issued a statement urging all churches in the Susquehanna Conference to stop all indoor worship and activities. Bishop Park stated, "This is a very grave situation that requires a sacrificial response. For your safety and that of your friends, family, and neighbors, I, as bishop, along with the full Cabinet urge you to not conduct indoor in-person worship or gatherings for the rest of the year." Albright-Bethune is already functioning virtually and will continue to do so with our worship, administrative, and social activities until the pandemic eases.
- **C**HURCH CONFERENCE - The Albright-Bethune Annual Church Conference was held on November 29. Brenda Leigey, our State College district superintendent, conducted the conference via Zoom with the leaders of our congregation to provide a safe environment. See Pastor McReynolds or Jackie Peagler if you have any questions about the conference or the business affairs of the church.
- **U**MC SCHOLARSHIPS & LOANS - United Methodist Church high school seniors and those enrolled in college who are also active in their church and/or in the conference may apply for a Fall 2021 scholarship offered through the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Students must apply online between **December 15–March 24** at <https://www.gbhem.org/loans-and-scholarships/scholarships>. Student loans are also available at low interest rates (with a credit worthy co-signer). Funds for these scholarships come from offerings taken on United Methodist Student Day, World Communion Sunday, and Native American Sunday. Please share this information with students who qualify for this support.
- **N**EW DENOMINATION - A group of progressive United Methodists and other Christians launched a new denomination named the Liberation Methodist Connexion, or LMX. The new church aims to center on the voices of people of color as well as queer and transgender individuals — those the LMX organizers see as marginalized in The United Methodist Church. "We are a grassroots denomination of former, current, and non-Methodist faith leaders working on the unfolding of the kin-dom of God," the Connexion [says on its website](#). "We intentionally invite the full participation of all who are living out their God-given identities and expressions." Organizers announced the new denomination's formation with an online worship service, presentation and after-party on November 29, the first Sunday of Advent and the start of the Christian year. The online gathering had more than 400 registrants. But because of technical difficulties, a number of those registrants were unable to log on, including United Methodist News. The new Connexion is getting off the ground after decades of intensifying debate within The United Methodist Church about how inclusive to be of LGBTQ Christians (From UM News).

- **C**HRISTMAS GIVING – You should now start thinking about making Christ a bigger part of your Christmas celebration. The *Christian Financial Concepts* newsletter recommends that we do some soul searching. This newsletter suggests that you decide the amount you plan to spend on gifts and then contribute 10% to Christ-like causes. For example, use the 10% to support food banks, orphans, and missions that spread the gospel in other nations.
- **E**ND OF EBOLA & MEASLES - As Congo continues to battle COVID-19, The UMC is celebrating two wins: the end of both a second Ebola outbreak this year and a measles epidemic that killed more than 7,000 children. Several of the church's hospitals and clinics helped the government vaccinate children against measles and other diseases, especially in the most remote areas of the country. On Nov. 18, Congo's Minister of Health, Dr. Eteni Longondo, announced the [end of an Ebola outbreak in Equateur Province](#), which was declared June 1. There were 55 deaths reported in the western Congo outbreak, which came on the heels of a nearly two-year outbreak in eastern Congo that killed more than 2,200 people. The end of the measles epidemic was declared Aug. 26. Congo has experienced recurrent measles epidemics for the past decade (From UM News - By Chadrack Tambwe Londe).
- **P**ECAN PIES – Thanks to everyone who bought the genuine Southern pecan pies last month for this annual fund raiser. This year B. Evans Kitchen (aka Blannie) baked 48 pies in time for Thanksgiving. The pies and contributions generated over \$1,000 for our church.
- **C**HRISTMAS SYMBOLS - How much do you know about Christmas symbols? Bells were used in ancient Asian cultures to announce happy and sad occasions. The winter plant mistletoe dates to Scandinavia and a myth wherein an evil spirit was forbidden from killing his enemy. Candles were used by Martin Luther who decorated the first Christmas tree. Candy canes are used in the US to symbolize God's solid rock promises. Christmas cards date to ancient Egypt and Rome when they were carved in wood. Poinsettias are native to Mexico and symbolize the Star of Bethlehem. The plant is named for Joel Poinsett, the first US Ambassador to Mexico. Holly and ivy are used to represent the crown Jesus wore when he was crucified. Please remember the history of these symbols as we celebrate the birth of Jesus (From *UM Interpreter Magazine*, November-December 2000, p. 14-15).
- **C**HURCH ZOOM MEETINGS – Do you miss seeing and hearing other Albright-Bethune members and worshippers? Well, our congregation holds weekly meetings on Wednesday nights from 7-8 p.m. using Zoom. This is an excellent opportunity to see and hear each other, socialize, and stay aware of church activities. An email is sent each week with the process for connecting. You can also participate by audio.
- **S**TRESS REDUCERS - With the Christmas holidays approaching, now is a good time to reflect on an issue of *A Christian Perspective* newsletter that offered 7 ways to reduce stress and make your life more enjoyable. **(1)** Allow time everyday for privacy, quiet, and introspection. **(2)** When you face an unpleasant task, do it early in the day. **(3)** Delegate responsibility to capable individuals. **(4)** Take a lunch break to get away from your problems. **(5)** Count to 1,000 (not 10) before doing or saying something to make matters worse. **(6)** Have a forgiving view of events and people because we live in an imperfect world. **(7)** Have an optimistic outlook because most people do the best they can.
- **O**FFICE HOURS - Pastor McReynolds has office hours at Albright-Bethune on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11-2. You can also reach him by email at [pmcreynolds@susumc.org](mailto:pmcreynolds@susumc.org) or call the church office at (814) 237-4404 during office hours. At other times, you can reach Pastor McReynolds on his home phone at (814) 308-9099.

- **A**DVENT - How much do you know about Advent which celebrates Christ's birth 2,020 years ago? Advent is derived from the Latin word *Adventus* which means coming. It begins on Sunday, November 29, and ends at sunset on Christmas Eve. Advent always includes four Sundays. The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday marks the start of the Christian year and the final victory. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays represent John the Baptist while the 4<sup>th</sup> represents events preceding Jesus' birth. Traditional colors include purple which means royalty and is linked to penitence and Mary, Jesus' mother. Blue represents hope and white and gold represent joy and festivity. Christmas Eve is not part of Advent, but is the beginning of Christmas.

- **F**INANCE CORNER - Each month the amount our church collects via offerings is posted in this section of the newsletter. Our November collections totaled \$5,923. See Cathy Bowen if you have questions about our church's finances.

Official records of individual giving will be distributed in January 2021. If you would like to know the total amount of your giving as of November 2020, please send me a text (814-574-8346) or an e-mail requesting your total. I will respond with just the amount. I thought some of you might like to know where you are with your total giving in the event you have unused designated dollars for charities or you would like to make sure your 2020 giving is close to or perhaps above what you gave in 2019. **Submitted by Cathy Bowen**

- **Y**OUR ITEMS - Send, email to [blanniebowen@gmail.com](mailto:blanniebowen@gmail.com) or give your items to **Blannie** by the **20th** of the month. Send your birthday, awards, church presentations, writings, etc.

## Calendar

Nov. 29-Dec. 24	The Season of Advent
December 11	Penn State Classes End
December 15	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
December 19	Penn State Fall Commencement
December 24	Christmas Eve Service, 6 p.m.
December 25	Celebrate the Birth of Jesus
January 1	New Year's Day – Welcome 2021
January 5	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
January 15	Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday
January 19	Penn State Classes Begin
February 2	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
February 17	Ash Wednesday
March 2	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
March 5	World Day of Prayer
March 14	Daylight Savings Time Begins; UMCOR Sunday
April 2	Good Friday
April 4	Easter Sunday
April 6	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
April 30	Penn State Classes End
May 4	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
May 6	National Day of Prayer
May 7-9	Penn State Commencement Exercises