



MARY AND MARTHA MAIL CIRCLE UMW

Christ United Methodist Church - Mobile, Alabama

DECEMBER 2014

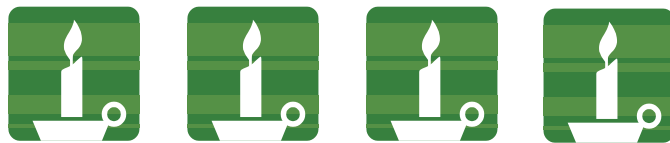
Journal through the Season of Advent

by Dionne Boissière*

The Holy season of Advent—which begins Nov. 30 and ends Dec. 24, Christmas Eve—is here again! This is my favorite time of year, because Advent, for the Christian, is a time of faithful preparation, sacred expectation and hopeful anticipation—not only for the birth of Jesus the Christ, the Messiah but also of Christ’s coming again. The word Advent derives from the Latin word meaning coming. In this season of light and hope as we symbolically wait for the birth of our Savior, we also anticipate and faithfully prepare for the new things that are coming, things that God will do in us and in the world around us even now.

The preparation time of Advent is not about the commercialism of a holiday season, but, rather, it is about being ready for a holy season of new dreams, new possibilities, new strategies, new plans, new methods of organizing, new outcomes, new ways of being and becoming, new ways of thinking and engaging, new joys and new hopes! In the midst of a world full of tragedy, war, hatred and injustice, we must embody the essence of this season and live out the hope of Christ in the world. Let us look deeper into the Advent story so that we can hear God’s call to be vigilant and bring truth and light to the confusion that plagues our world as we engage in faithful action on behalf of women, children and youth, and walk with those who alone are not powerful enough to secure justice for themselves.

I invite you to journey with me and keep an Advent journal. We will use the four weeks of the Advent season as the focus of our journal entries. According to our Christian liturgy, each



week in Advent we focus on a different attribute, and each Sunday a candle is lit on the Advent wreath to represent the coming of Christ into the world:

- Week 1—**HOPE**. First Sunday of Advent, the first purple candle is lit. This candle is typically called the “Prophecy Candle” in remembrance of the prophets, primarily Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. This candle represents **HOPE** or expectation in anticipation of the coming Messiah.
- Week 2—**LOVE**. Second Sunday of Advent, the second purple candle is lit. This candle typically represents **LOVE**. Some traditions call this the “Bethlehem Candle,” symbolizing Christ’s manger. This is God’s love for the world to bring new life, light and liberation to all.
- Week 3—**JOY**. Third Sunday of Advent the third purple candle is lit. This candle is called the “Shepherds Candle” and represents **JOY**.
- Week 4—**PEACE**. Fourth Sunday is the pink candle, oftentimes called the “Angels Candle,” represents **PEACE**, the peace that the angels sing of with the coming of the Messiah. On Christmas Eve, the white center candle is traditionally lit. This candle is called the “Christ Candle” and represents the life of Christ that has come into the world.

In Journey to the Well, Bishop Vashti Mackenzie, the first African American woman bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, reminds us of three disciplines essential to positive change: personal investment, personal reflection and personal transformation. This Advent, let’s engage these personal disciplines along with our

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spiritual practices of meditation, prayer and journaling to discover new ways of thinking about ourselves and the work God has called each of us to.

Using the Advent season's weekly themes of hope, love, joy and peace to journal, consider: What things am I HOPING for from/in God—and what personal investments am I willing to make to attain it? In what ways can my HOPE in God and in God's promises for humanity be enhanced through personal reflection? How do I HOPE to see personal transformation manifest in my life, in my new way of thinking about who I am in Christ and in/for the world.

The Advent season ends on Christmas Eve, but its message remains with us always;

Shalom!

*The Rev. Dionne P. Boissière, M.Div., is chaplain at the Church Center for the United Nations.



*Presentation of the
Special Membership Pin
2014 - Faye Sellers*



Mark your **2015 CALENDAR** and make plans now to participate as you are able:

CHRIST UMW Dates 2015

Tuesday, February 3 - 9 am to 11:30 am - General Meeting - Hospitality Room
 Sunday, March 29 - 8 am to Noon - Bake Sale - Courtyard Porch and Christ Center
 Saturday, May 30 - Mission Study and Short Business Meeting - Hospitality Room
 Saturday, August 8 - 9 am to Noon - General Meeting
 Tuesday, October 6 - Program Planning for 2016 - Room A-204
 Sunday, November 8 - UMW Sunday - All day - Catered Lunch at Noon
 Sunday, December 6 - 9 am to Noon - Soup Sale

MOBILE DISTRICT UMW Dates 2015

Saturday, February 28 - 9 am-Noon - Mobile District, V.I.P. meeting - Theodore UMC
 Saturday, April 11 - 10 am to Noon - District Spiritual Enrichment Day - Pine Grove UMC
 Sunday, September 20 - 2:30 pm - District Annual Day - Westside UMC

ALABAMA WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE UMW Dates 2015

February 20-21 - Tapestry Retreat - Dothan District Hosting—Enterprise First.
 March 20-22, 2015 - Spiritual Enrichment Retreat - Blue Lake
 July 31-August 1, 2015 - Mission u - Dothan UMC
 October 23-24, 2015 - AWF UMW Conference Leadership Training and Annual Day.

Note - It would be so good if our Mary and Martha Mail Circle had at least two representatives at each of the above events. If you can attend, please let [Vera Moore](#) know so arrangements can be made for you.

Selections From the Prayer Calendar
+ *Mary and Martha Birthdays*

- DEC 1 Community Development for All
 DEC 2 Dwaine Morgan (CCW)
 DEC 3 David Goran (M)
 DEC 4 United Methodist Volunteer in Mission
 DEC 5 Kristen Schmitz (M)
 DEC 6 Omega Ramos (D)
 DEC 7 Jonathan McCurley (M)
 DEC 8 Mary Hill (D)
 DEC 9 Julie Taylor (S)
 DEC 10 Priscilla Jaiah (M)
 DEC 11 Carolyn Lawhorn (D)
 DEC 12 B. Ann LePage (D)
 DEC 13 Winsome D. Wright (S)
 DEC 14 Sung-ok Lee (D/S)

Norma Spiller

- DEC 15 Charles Barrow (HMR)
 DEC 16 Deborah Strausbaugh (M)
 DEC 17 Becky Harrell (M)
 DEC 18 FONDAMA and Aga Missions, Haiti
 DEC 19 Global Health Action, China
 DEC 20 Linda Marquez (S)
 DEC 21 Alison Gilmroe (M)
 DEC 22 Xenon U. Antone (S)
 DEC 23 Zachary Ferguson (US-2)
 DEC 24 David Pascua (M)
 DEC 25 Christian Zigbuo (M)
 DEC 26 Sandra Groves (M)
 DEC 27 Darren Carr (S)
 DEC 28 Harris Memorial College, Philippines
 DEC 29 Elizabeth Soard (M)
 DEC 30 Luz M. Knight (S)
 DEC 31 Farhan Gadit (S)

The above are “selections” - the Prayer Calendar contain many more birthdays, art, devotionals, and information. Purchase your own copy at [United Methodist Women Mission Resources Center](#).

Response Moments
Selected by Vera Moore

RESPONSE is the official magazine of United Methodist Women. Its goals are to educate for mission, to interpret the Purpose of United Methodist Women and to strengthen the organization.

I urge you to subscribe to RESPONSE magazine to totally enjoy the amazing articles, timely information and wisdom shared by United Methodist Women from all areas and positions.

In the December issue you will find articles to make you THINK:

Editor, Yvette Moore writes, “It’s Advent, the time of year that we prepare not only to celebrate Christ’s birth but also for Christ’s coming anew into our hearts and troubled world. While Christmas is a time of great joy, Advent’s more solemn observances—reading Scripture, reflecting on our life and times, penitence—prepare us for Christmas and make fresh our yearning for Christ and heartfelt call: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!”

United Methodist Women President, Yvette Kim Richards, is shown at a district Reading Program event presenting a mission pin to River Jordan, author of *Praying for Strangers* at a Heartland District Reading Program event in Kansas City, Missouri. She writes of her joy in visiting Brenda Thompson, the Reading Program Specialist, offices in New York City.

Harriett Jane Olson questions the gifts we bring to the world and to the communities we serve: Kindness? Compassion? Willingness to see and to stand with those who are oppressed? Such gifts are a way of responding to God’s astounding blessings, a way of worship. You may read this entire article [online](#).

Tara Barnes is managing editor of RESPONSE gives suggestions as to how to use the information included in this issue of OUR magazine.

Three articles and three versions of Responsively Yours is placed online each month but to know the true value of RESPONSE currently you must [subscribe](#) to receive your own personal copy or visit Lighthouse Library where you may peruse the magazine there.

Fitness I Focus

by Jennifer Blunier



Photo Credit: Dave Blu

If you have ever been in a big race or big event, you know how important it is to be prepared. This past year, I had the privilege of watching (and helping) my husband as he prepared to take on his first ever Ironman. For those of you who don't know what that is—it's a 2.5 mile swim, 116 mile bike ride, followed by a marathon. It takes both mental and physical preparation to be able to ignore the distractions of every day life and focus on a task that is a year away.

Today in church, we discussed how to be prepared for Christmas. The pastor spoke on the importance of less distractions (how many presents? how many parties??) and focusing instead on the true meaning of Christmas. I challenge you all as we enter into the holiday season to stay focused on Christ instead of parties, presents and the hoopla Christmas tends to bring.



Service Projects 2014

Your involvement with service projects will be published here as you report them to us

- Gift to Mission in memory of Elizabeth Olson.
- Gift to Open Door Ministries - display cases
- Gift to Crossroads - meals at McKemie Place
- Gift to member - flood victim
- Gift to member's friend - hardship, illness.
- Gift to Children's Sabbath
- Funeral programs for a district member
- Estate closing - numerous items to Open Door
- Gift to family of hit and run accident
- Pies for Safe Haven

and shared with CUMW treasurer, combined with others from CUMC and throughout the organization.

This publication is the monthly virtual meeting of the Mary & Martha Mail Circle, United Methodist Women at Christ United Methodist Church, Mobile, Alabama. Our Circle is just like each of the other Circles of Christ UMW with the exception that we do not have monthly meetings other than by this "virtual" program, devotion, prayer calendar/concerns, and Response moments. We make annual pledges to mission and participate in the projects of CUMW in all ways possible. We attend General Meetings as we are able. We constantly keep each other and each woman of UMW in our prayers.

Questions? Contact: Circle Coordinator, Vera Moore - 888-248-1680 or email - vmoore4474@gmail.com