

December 3, 2023



Christmas 2023

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Every Christmas you and I find ourselves located between the times of Jesus' first coming: Mary, Joseph, Angels, Innkeeper, stable, shepherds, and Magi, and Jesus' second coming: new Jerusalem, every knee bent, the divine establishing of the true world ordering of things. In each event you and I celebrate the Lordship of Jesus Christ: Herod, Pilate, Caesar, and all world rulers tend to take offense at his rule, then and now.

Here is how Christmas reminds us that we are always caught *between the times*. The New Testament takes very seriously the powers of sin, suffering, injustice, and death and expects them to continue their destructive work among us as long as the world exists. Christ's final victory over these *enemies* won't come until the history of the world itself finally ends. On the other hand, the New Testament also takes so seriously the victory of Christ over these *enemies* in his life, death and resurrection that it confidently asserts that they are already defeated and doomed. In other words, both things are said to be true: the rule of God in and for the world is *not yet* here but it is *already* here. Christ is not yet but already Lord. Is it not an outright contradiction to say both things? Must it not be either already or not yet, either the kingdom of God as a future hope or the kingdom of God as a present reality? NO, say those who take both claims of the New Testament seriously, the whole truth

of the gospel of Jesus Christ is precisely that *both* are true. But how is this possible?

The biblical interpreters and theologians who first sought to defend this understanding of Christ's lordship and God's kingdom worked it out in the 1940s and 1950s, and illustrated it with what has become a familiar analogy from the end of World War II. When Allied forces landed in Normandy, the decisive battle of the whole war was fought. After that it was certain that Nazi Germany was going to lose. Between D-Day and VE-Day the Germans fought a number of desperate battles across Europe. Many lives were lost and much damage done to the town and cities before the final surrender. But after the decisive battle in Normandy, it was clear how the war was going to turn out. The war was *already* won even if it were *not yet* over.

The decisive battle of all human history was fought when in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God invaded a world ruled and tormented by the dark powers that lead to war, famine, destruction, death, etc. But the final victory of God over them will come only with final triumph of the risen Christ at the end of all history. *Between the times* is where the gospel of Christ locates us this Christmas 2023, and the deadly battle between God and the powers of darkness still goes on, but the victory of Christ that has been won is the guarantee of the final victory that is surely on the way. So, both things are true: In Jesus Christ the kingdom of God has come, *the first Christmas*, and is coming completely in the 2nd coming. Jesus will be victorious Lord because he is *already victorious Lord*. It is true that you and I will continue to live in a twilight zone in which the light of God's compassion and justice are still engaged in a struggle with the powers of darkness, but because you and I remember, especially at Christmas and Easter times, what God has done in Christ and can therefore have hope for what God will do, we may be certain that it is not the twilight that comes before darkness overcomes the light but the twilight that is the dawn of a new day when light will overcome the darkness.

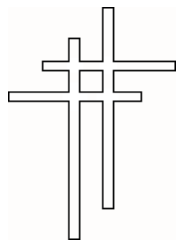
Καλα Χριστουγεννα (kala christougenna)

Merry Christmas,

Jim Sprouse

Please Celebrate Sunday's Message

Huguenot United Methodist Church is inviting you to our Sunday Morning Worship Service. This in-person service begins at 11 a.m. Please join us and take part in our worship and praise of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!



Pastor Jim Sprouse will provide us with the message

“Seeking Direction for Our Future”

We hope you will join us!

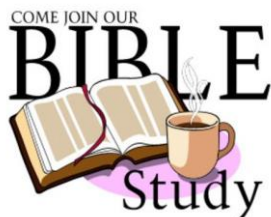


HUMC Nursery

Our nursery caregivers, Rosalie Koch and a volunteer, are at church every Sunday morning and ready to welcome toddler children in the nursery! **Childcare is provided from 9:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**



Adult Bible Study/Sunday School



Our Adult Bible Study/Sunday School class begins gathering around 9:30 a.m. for a time of fellowship. Our lesson begins at 10 a.m. Our class meets in the Fellowship Hall.

The title of our lesson for Sunday, December 3, is “Filled with the Holy Spirit.” The focal passage is Luke 1: 5-23. The background text is Luke 1. The purpose statement is “To determine ways God fills us with the Holy Spirit.”

We look forward to your participation in our class. If you have any questions, comments, or feedback regarding our HUMC Adult Bible Study please do not hesitate to contact me.

Gerry Flinchbaugh (804) 314-4817
gflinb@gmail.com



THIS Sunday!

Please join us for our Fellowship time after worship **THIS Sunday, December 3.** There will be ornaments to make and take home for your Christmas tree and cookies to decorate, plus Cissy's famous hot dogs and other delicious treats to enjoy.

Assisting Families of Inmates

GIFTS are due THIS SUNDAY, Dec. 3!

AFOI (Assisting Families of Inmates) has a children's service for children of incarcerated parents. They are helping to stop the school to prison pipeline and intergenerational cycles of incarceration, by helping children learn skills that resolve conflict. We have volunteered to donate Christmas gifts for a small number of children. Please select your gift tag from our Angel Tree. Wrap them, attach the tags that you received in your selection and return the gifts by or on **December 3.**



Your donation will be appreciated by the many people who work hard to make this organization a success.

With Great Expectations,
Your Mission Team

Poinsettias for the Church



Our congregation looks forward to having our church decorated with poinsettias during the Advent season. Flyers will be available this Sunday for you to order a poinsettia to be placed in the church in honor or memory of family or friends. The cutoff date for ordering poinsettias will be **December 10.** Please place your order form and your check for the poinsettias in the offering plate or the church office. The cost of each poinsettia is \$15.

Sarah Coffey



Joy of Crafts – Bazaar **THIS SUNDAY!**

The Joy of Crafts Holiday Bazaar is back again this Sunday with some new additions and plenty of options for gifts. This is the only fundraiser for Joy of Crafts, and your support is very much needed and appreciated. Please stop by the Fellowship Hall on your way out of worship! The Bazaar will continue through Sun., Dec. 10.

Joy of Crafts has recently added a new source for donations - dresses for girls in Haiti, delivered there by a local Baptist church's mission team. We recently donated **51** dresses and plan to make more!

This is in addition to the items we make for nursing homes, homeless shelters and hospitals, including dialysis mitts, fleece hats, drain bags, children's pillowcases, walker and wheelchair totes and dignity bibs. We are still looking for donations of collared shirts to turn into clothing protectors. And we are always looking for volunteers who can sew any of these items - the skills needed range from beginner to advanced. For more information, contact Molly Sprouse at mollysprouse@gmail.com.

Rise Against Hunger

Thank you, thank you to all who participated in our Rise Against Hunger event. We packaged 20,000 meals that will be shared soon with our friends in need throughout the world. We had a very successful turnout. Families from five to ? participated in our event. We had congregations from two churches join with us. We had many helpers to make this event successful. If I thanked everyone individually, I know I would leave someone out. You all know who you are and how important you were to our very successful event.

Again, many thanks,
Judith Westerhouse

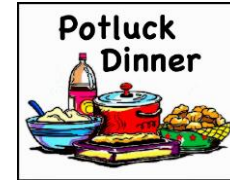


SAVE THE DATE!

Wednesday Night Pot Luck Fellowship Dinner

Wednesday, December 13, at 6 p.m.

in the Fellowship Hall



Bring a dish to share and fellowship with your church family and friends.

*Please come early/stay after if you can assist.
Many hands make light work!*

Don't miss it!
PIPS - Puppets in Praise and Service
Holiday Program
Dec. 13



Please note: We will not have a Fellowship Dinner on December 27.

Our Wednesday Night Pot Luck Fellowship Dinners are on the second and last Wednesday of each month. Feel free to email or text Shirley Bradshaw with questions at sbrads2321@gmail.com or (804) 240-1240.

Caregiver Assistant Needed

Our church provides nursery caregivers Sunday mornings during worship and Bible Study / Sunday School for infants and toddlers. We are committed to offering a loving, caring, and safe environment and adhere to the Church Child Protection Policy by providing two adult caregivers. Our Caregiver Assistant recently resigned to return to her home church. Your Pastor / Staff Parish Relations Committee (P/SPRC) is advertising for a new hire. Volunteers are filling in temporarily. Please contact Shirley Bradshaw, (804) 240-1240 or sbrads2321@gmail.com, if you can volunteer in the interim. Additionally, please contact Shirley if you know of a potential candidate.



Make a Joyful Noise!



Choir practice has resumed! New members (or those who might be interested) are **WELCOME!** We meet each Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the Choir Room. Please contact Connie Salmeri with any questions. (804) 314-6308

CHURCH CALENDAR

Sunday, Dec. 3 – First Sunday of Advent

10 a.m...Adult Bible Study/Sunday School (FH)
11 a.m...Worship
12 p.m...Coffee Fellowship (FH)
12 p.m...Joy of Crafts Holiday Bazaar (FH)
12 p.m...Puppets in Praise and Service Practice (PR)

Wednesday, Dec. 6

10 a.m...Preschool Tour for Parents
7 p.m...Choir Practice (CR)

Friday, Dec. 8

10 a.m...Library Work Session
10 a.m...Feed the Homeless (K)

Sunday, Dec. 10 – Second Sunday of Advent

10 a.m...Adult Bible Study/Sunday School (FH)
11 a.m...Worship
12 p.m...Joy of Crafts Holiday Bazaar (FH)
3 p.m...Puppets in Praise and Service Performance at Brandermill Woods

CR – Choir Room FH – Fellowship Hall
K – Kitchen L – Library PR – Puppet Room



Happy Birthday!

Beth Woodall (Dec. 8)

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please call, leave a note or send an email to Elaine so she can include you!

THE UPPER ROOM

DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Where the World Meets to Pray

Copies of the **November and December** edition of The Upper Room are now available on the greeting table at the front entrance. Please consider making a donation in the labeled box.



Pray For...

Nick Anderson

Cheryl Reynolds and Family in the passing of her mother, Mildred Powell

Carmen Hoge

Stuart Joerg

In an effort to keep the prayer requests current, names posted will be removed after 30 days unless requested otherwise.

Upcoming EVENTS

- Tues., Dec. 12 – United Women in Faith Christmas Luncheon @ 11 a.m. (FH)
- Tues., Dec. 12 – Church Council Meeting @ 6:30 p.m. on Zoom
- Wed., Dec. 13 – Fellowship Pot Luck Dinner and Puppets in Praise and Service performance!

Church Office Hours:

Pastor Jim is in the office on Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Elaine is in the office each Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. These hours are subject to change on occasion. (FYI-Elaine's hours may continue to vary as she supports family needs. She is checking email daily and will respond to requests for assistance as soon as possible.) If you have an article for the **pulse** newsletter, please email it to Elaine **by Wednesday at 10 a.m.**

Note: This newsletter and the Sunday Bulletin are posted on the church website by Friday evening.

10661 Duryea Drive
Richmond, VA 23235-2106
(804) 272-6820
HuguenotUMC@gmail.com
Website: HUGUENOTUMC.org

