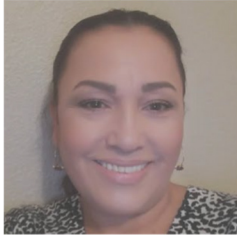


Dec 2019 & Jan 2020 Caller



Pastor Diana's Letter

Last week I received a notification on my cell phone from the weather app that we could get some snow. My first thought was: It is almost Christmas!

In preparation for advent we will have our sermon series "Almost Christmas" based on the book with the same name by Grey E. Devega and Ingrid McIntyre. The series will offer a theological analysis of John Wesley's sermon "The Almost Christian." The book begins with this illustration: -In a particular episode of the classic comic strip Dennis the Menace, Dennis is standing in the living room on Christmas morning, brightly decorated tree in the corner, with stacks of empty boxes and shreds of wrapping paper all around him. Having opened up his mountain of gifts, he stands there, arms outstretched and yelling at the top of his lungs for all the house to hear: "Is that all?"

I definitely would have loved to be there and tell Dennis that he is missing the point. That Christmas is not about the gifts we received or getting stressed over what we want to buy as gifts to others. Christmas is not about what we want. That is the consumerist side of society that not even black Friday could define what Christmas is all about.

The truth of the matter is that we do have a little Dennis inside. As we go through a December filled with the crazy long gift list, party planning, house cleaning, home decorating, we could see ourselves not participating in this crazy shopping season and asked ourselves: "Is that all?" Is this what Christmas is all about? Shouldn't be more than that teaches us the real meaning of the celebration of this season?

There is a gift that we just sent to God. It is the gift of ourselves. God wants nothing else then our hearts. The gift of our hearts is all that matters to our Savior. Jesus came to earth to give us abundant life for us to enjoy it here on earth. God gave us a priceless gift: Jesus.

Christmas is also about giving ourselves to others. It is to remember those who don't have the privilege to celebrate Christmas because they have no place to do so. Many people are

En uno de las escenas de la película "Denis el Travieso" se ve a Daniel en la inmensa y lujosa sala de su casa. En medio de la sala esta un inmenso árbol de navidad decorado con luces brillantes. También hay cajas y papel de regalo por todos lados. Se ve una montaña de regalos para Denis. El niño comienza a gritar a todo pulmón para que lo escuchen toda la casa: "¿Eso es todo?" Claro que nosotros le diríamos a Denis que eso no es la navidad. Pero, preferimos recordar que la navidad no se trata de recibir regalos, hacer la lista de regalos que queremos, o recibir todo lo que deseamos. Aunque el consumismo en las tiendas nos diga otra cosa, el "Viernes Negro" no define la navidad.

Si somos honestos, miraremos que nosotros tenemos una voz interna que hasta cierto nivel nos hace sentir como Denis. Ahora que vamos a llegar a un tiempo ocupado haciendo lista de regalos, limpiando y decorando la casa, y planeando asistir de fiesta en fiesta, debemos apartarnos de esa locura y preguntarnos: ¿"Eso es todo"? ¿Eso es todo para la navidad? ¿No hay otra cosa que nos enseñe el valor de celebrar esta navidad?

Claro que lo hay. Dile a ese Denis el travieso dentro de ti que busque debajo del árbol de navidad otra vez, porque hay un regalo que no viste, tiene tu nombre. Pero fíjate que tu nombre no está donde dice: "Para", sino donde dice: "De:". Este regalo no es para ti. Este regalo no lo debes de abrir, sino mandarlo tú. Es tu regalo para Dios. Es el regalo de ti mismo.

Es el regalo de todo tu corazón, le entregas tu vida, tu voluntad, tu compromiso; tus habilidades, permitiendo que Dios forme tu vida de acuerdo a su santa voluntad. Muchos de los personajes de la historia del nacimiento de Jesús, experimentaron exactamente eso. Ellos fueron transformados no por lo que recibían, sino porque se rendían ante nuestro Señor y le servían. Se trata de dar a Cristo de regalo a quienes lo necesitan. Ese es el mejor regalo que puedes dar a tus amistades. ¡Dales a Cristo!

walking alone in the cold nights of our city. No home, no shelter, no food, and no friends.

Last week I was driving by and saw a woman with a little girl pulling two suitcases. It was 35 degrees. The woman was crying. She seemed lost. The girl seemed cold and scared. I stopped to ask them if I could be of any help. The mother said: "No, thanks." I realized she was scared of a stranger. Then I asked: Where do you live? She responded: "I don't have a place to stay." That broke my heart. I introduced myself as a pastor and offered her to take them to the church. She was scared and simply said: "Gracias." As I left with tears in my eyes, I remember that it is a reality of our community. We have hundreds of people walking without knowing where to go, where to stay and what to eat.

I invite us this advent season to open our hearts like never before to retake the meaning of Christmas. Ask ourselves the question: "Is that all I can give to my Lord?" Doesn't Jesus deserve more? Isn't it possible that God has given me His Spirit and empowered me to do more than just the basics, and has called me to make an extraordinary impact for the Kingdom? Doesn't God only want my heart?

So, for the next four weeks, through our new sermon series: "Almost Christmas," we will explore the powerful four words: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. We will explore them more fully. We will do this, not by our power and strength, but by "the Holy Spirit given unto us."

I invite you to join me on this sermon series as we prepare our hearts and minds for advent!

Let's become a gift to God and one another.

Merry Christmas!
Pastor Diana

Preparemos nuestros corazones para este tiempo de adviento (la llegada) y retomemos el significado de la navidad. Pregúntate esta pregunta: ¿"Eso es todo lo que debemos darle al Señor? ¿No merece El mucho más? ¿No sería posible que Dios nos ha dado de Su Espíritu para empoderarnos y hacer más que lo básico, y nos ha llamado para hacer cosas extraordinarias que impacten Su Reino? ¿No quiere el Señor nada otra cosa que nuestro corazón?

Por eso, en las próximas semanas de adviento, tendremos la nueva serie de mensajes: "Casi Navidad". Exploraremos las cuatro poderosas palabras: Esperanza, Paz, Gozo y Amor. Las estudiaremos profundamente con la ayuda del poderoso Espíritu del Señor el cual nos ha sido ya dado.

Entonces, ¡bienvenido tiempo de adviento!

Seamos nosotros mismo el mejor regalo para Dios y para otros.

¡Feliz Navidad!
Su Pastora, Diana



Advent Preaching Series

Almost Christmas

December 1 “An Altogether Peace” Ephesians 4:25-32 Luke 1:5-25

1st Sunday of Advent: Wesley Covenant Service and Holy Communion

Once again Jesus is coming to be among us, even though we know he is already here. We speak of the presence of “Peace on earth, goodwill to all,” though the evidence around us feels like is a long way from coming. Even though society signs of it as “the most wonderful time of the year,” we know that the distance to that destination feels very far indeed. We have a destination and distance sings on the road to the manger.

December 8 “An Altogether HOPE” Luke 1:46-55 1 Peter 1:3-7

2nd Sunday of Advent

Altogether HOPE requires expanding our hope to include looking forward to the well-being of others. Such a hope would mean us stretching as Christians, and knowing that it will not be always going to feel good. We have a family in faith that extends all over the world. Altogether hope means embracing struggle, leaning on God, and looking forward to the well-being of others.

December 15 “An Altogether Love” Luke 1:34-38 Isaiah 35:1-10

3rd Sunday of Advent

Too often we settle for an “almost love” instead of the real thing. We content ourselves with a pale beam that leaves plenty of shadows rather than a bright illumination that can fill the world. An “almost love” is a love that welcomes only the parts of people that are desirable, or palatable, or easy handle. In contrast, an “altogether love” the evil-conquering kind of love- is a love that welcomes the whole self and honors that we are made up of many parts. An altogether love is cross-cultural and countercultural. It can be irrational to love in this way or even to be loved in this way.

December 22 “An Altogether JOY” Isaiah 7:10-17 Matthew 1:18-25

4th Sunday of Advent

Christmas is so close. The anticipation is palpable, but what is it that we are anticipating? Are we filled with an almost insatiable and expectant joy to welcome Christ into the world? Maybe we are embarrassingly excited about what we might find under the tree? We know intuitively that there is a real difference when we sing “joy to the world” with a heart of faith-and the happiness we feel when our Christmas list is fulfilled after all the presents have been opened. But what exactly is the difference?

December 24 “Messiah, Prince of peace” Isaiah 9:6

Christmas Candlelight Service

If we want the peace of God, we have to make peace with God through belief in Jesus Christ. Until that occurs we may have fleeting moments of peace, but we’ll never have the peace that passes understanding. If I haven’t made my peace with God, then underneath the external peace will be that nagging war that rages between God and me. He’s ready to make peace – He’s provided the written accord and the pen to sign. All we have to do is pick it up and sign it. The peace of God starts by making peace with God.

2020 Preaching Series
Fuel of Life
James 5:13-18

Week 1: (New) Powerful Power!

The power we have when prayer is active part of our life and how prayer and faith can help guide us and lead us through barriers we think we can't overcome. There is a point in life when everybody needs to pray, regardless of the believes, even the radical atheist everyone believes that somewhere there is sovereign power over the universe.

Week 2: Don't be Afraid of the Holy Spirit! John 16:8-15

Don't Be Afraid of the Holy Ghost. The invisible spiritual presence of the Holy Spirit is better than Christ's own visible, physical presence with us. That is what Jesus said to his disciples: "But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you."

Week 3: The Fullness Of God 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

If you have been a Christian for a while, I am sure you have undoubtedly experienced very cool stuffs. Changes in your life, restored relationship, answer prayers. Surely, God has been good to us. if there is more out there for us? What if there is more for our church? Is there more in this life than what we are experiencing?

Week 4: New Enthusiasm 1 Corinthians 15:42-58

How to gain new enthusiasm by changing your focus from the temporary to the eternal. Everything on this earth is temporarily, therefore we must focus on the invisible, eternal promises of God. The earthy things will pass and we should not hold on to it. If we look at the world we will be disappointed with so many evil and darkness, but if we keep our heart in what God has promises to us, we will find at peace.

Our Church Family

Congratulations to **Del and Pat Lawson** on the birth of their great grandson, **Owen**,

Thanks to the congregation, \$10,221 was given toward the @\$18,000 water damage repairs. Your gifts were very much appreciated!

**In Remembrance as we Observed All Saint's Sunday on
November 1, 2019**



Larry Ruh-Our family is thankful for the church family Larry had at Hughes United Methodist and the ways in which you all surrounded him with care and love through his many years of membership there.

Many thanks and blessings in Christ!

Alice Rauch



Bill Duvall was an amazing brother, wonderful son, beloved uncle, father, deeply loving husband and a friend to all who knew him.

Help Wanted

Two of the members of the team that produces the Sunday PowerPoint slides are leaving us at the end of the year. It would be wonderful if we could replace both of them as quickly as possible so that the remaining 2 will not have to pull double duty every month.

Please see Marie Bunting if you are willing to round out this very useful team! She will provide a CD with the individual hymns on it that you will need.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Financial Snapshot

October Income

\$44,330

October Expenses

\$36,941

Year to date Income

\$413,377

Year to date expenses

\$458,751



It is time to decorate the church for the Christmas season! We are faced with sort of an awkward situation this year because Thanksgiving is as late as it can get, so we need to get the decorations up ASAP thereafter.

We have 2 options:

1. A decorating session on Saturday, Nov. 30, starting at 9:30 am. I realize that this time during Thanksgiving weekend could be a problem for some because of travel plans or other conflicts.
2. After the 10:00 service on Sunday, Dec. 1, but that may be an issue with lunch plans, etc. (and it is still at the end of Thanksgiving weekend.)

Please let me know if you are interested and available to decorate at these times, or suggest other possibilities.

Dwight French-[dwightkf@comcast.net](mailto:dwrightkf@comcast.net)

The Giving Tree will be in the Narthex soon! Hughes will once again work with TESS and assist three needy families with gifts and food.

There are three families which include 12 individuals along with a baby on the way on our list.

These families have encountered various problems including eviction, domestic violence, job loss and the trials of adapting to a new country.

We have also been asked by the Board of Childcare to assist 20 young men with clothing needs. There will therefore be 20 extra items on the tree for them. Extra donations of money are always appreciated.

All articles will need to be returned and separated by December 15th. Delivery to the families will be later that week. If you have any questions or wish to assist in this mission, please contact Kathy Ripley or Jill Glixon.



Kindly e-mail your Caller articles to Marty Weaver, Editor at caller@hughesumc.org or place them in the Caller drawer outside of the Church Office by the 15th of each month.

Please visit the Hughes Website at www.hughesumc.org