

# The Outlook

WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
"Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors"

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Anne Schlesinger, Pastor

December 9, 2020

## 10:30 a.m. Worship on Facebook

**December 13: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent** Isaiah 57:14-21, Luke 1:46-66  
"Hope and Joy"

**December 20: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday In Advent** Isaiah 9:2-7, John 1:1-14,  
"Hope and Peace"

Anne Schlesinger, preaching



## *Christmas Eve Service, Thursday, December 24 6 pm.*

This service will be offered on-line, so will be scriptures and slides telling the Christmas story and a brief homily. Please join us.

## *Faithful Givers*

You should have now received your pledge card in the mail for supporting the ministries of Wesley UMC in 2021. You can also turn in your pledge via the online web form posted on our website. The web form sends the results directly to the church office. Go to the church's homepage at [www.wesleybakersfield.org](http://www.wesleybakersfield.org) and click on the "Online Pledge Form" link in the "Quick Links" section below the church's phone number. The online form will require you to enter your name and pledge for 2021. There will places for optional second mile gifts. Please prayerfully consider a monetary pledge. Thank you and God bless you!

## ♪ A Note from the Pastor

***Here is the Lord God, coming with strength, with a triumphant arm, bringing his reward with him and his payment before him. Like a shepherd, God will tend the flock; he will gather lambs in his arms and lift them onto his lap. He will gently guide the nursing ewes.***  
—Isaiah 40: 10-11

I give thanks for Wesley UMC, and I pray you all made some kind of family connection on Thanksgiving. Our holiday celebrations have certainly been affected by the COVID virus. I heard from several people that they shared a meal with family on Zoom, and at least one person reported that other family members have had to learn how to help with meal preparation!

Now we enter a new season—the first season of the Christian year. According to *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, Advent “proclaims the coming of the Christ—whose birth we prepare to celebrate once again.” It is truly a season of joy, and yet it should include some introspection as well. Last week we heard Mark’s version of Jesus’ baptism, and John ben Zechariah proclaimed the time to repent, saying, “One stronger than I am is coming after me. I’m not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” In Matthew’s version it says Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit *and fire!* That indeed is cause for introspection. May it enrich your daily prayer time.

As predicted, the pandemic is worsening as the weather gets colder, but the news is reporting that a COVID vaccine is on its way. The vaccine will be offered first to health care workers when it is available, but hopefully it won’t be too long before there will be enough to offer to the general public. I look forward to greeting you in the sanctuary once it is safe! Even after we are able to return to the sanctuary, we will continue our online presence, which will keep people who are homebound or traveling connected to us.

If you have needs that are unmet, please be sure to let me know. I am able to bring communion elements to you safely, and we have several people who have volunteered to keep you connected by mail or phone calls. Let me know your needs, and we shall see how our community can help.

Stay blessed and healthy!

Pastor Anne

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### *The Administrative Council*

The Administrative Council will meet Tuesday, December 15, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

## *Prayers of Joys and Concerns*

### **Prayers of Healing for:**

Regina (having a bone marrow transplant)  
Sherry (undiagnosed abdominal pain)  
John (continued healing from surgery)  
Lynn Hall and her husband (tested + COVID)  
Michelle (awaiting biopsy results)  
Brian (test results: myeloma count is up)  
Darcy (thyroid cancer close to trachea)  
Corby's Stepmother (+ COVID)  
Corby & Siobhan awaiting test results.  
Michael (fell and injured back—protection from COVID as he seeks treatment)  
Becky, a woman seeking asylum who is having difficulty finding health care.  
Laura's sister-in-law Vanessa who broke her foot and requires surgery  
For Linda Tilton, for her friend's granddaughter who has tested positive for COVID  
For Bob and Martha Covey who have been under the weather  
Continued healing for baby Justin, and help for the situation of his 5 siblings  
For Scott—he has many medications, and has developed a fever  
Continued healing for Maryann Beuchler

### **Prayers of Peace, Comfort, and God's Presence**

Protection for people who may be traveling this weekend  
Discernment of what is safe for good health  
Prayer for all who are hungry and cold.  
Prayers for relief for the people of Haines Alaska, and all people of Southeast Alaska dealing with a huge landslide. Multiple roads have been destroyed and there is little access to help, and there are seven more days of rain predicted.  
Prayers for firefighters and victims of fires in Southern California  
Prayers that people make good decisions regarding COVID to bring the infection rate down,  
Prayers that people are able to cope with the many changes in their lives.  
For all children in the foster care system

### **Prayers of Gratitude**

Relindis was granted asylum  
Thankful for working immigrants  
The Blessings of David Atkin's song, "I am Thankful"  
Dan O'Dell's handmade animals decorating the sanctuary  
Barbara's brother John is doing very well  
Glad to be content with different ways of celebrating  
Online connections  
For God's beautiful creation, For small blessings—fresh bananas  
For the Hope of a COVID vaccine soon  
For the ability to notice our blessings  
Grateful that the problems in Mesa Verde Detention Center are receiving notice.  
Gratitude Leanne Nichol's successful surgery-cancer was removed, and she does not need chemo

## *From The Bishop*

Bishop Carcaño asked all church council members to consider the following questions for Christian Conferencing. The Admin Council discussed them at length at Wesley's Annual Charge Conferences, but they are important questions for the whole church. If you would like to include your insight for the Bishop and Core Team to consider, please let the office or Pastor Anne know.

What in your world has changed since your last regular annual charge or church conference?

How have these changes affected your life and the life of your church?

What changes will your church have to make in order to respond to the changes in your community?

What will your leadership as a church and as individual disciples of Jesus need to look like going forth for you to continue your work of disciple-making for the transformation of the world?

What in your church's history of faith commitment can be a help to you and to the world in the days and years to come?

Bishop Carcaño would like us to compile and document the answers "so that the heart and spirit of our church and community are included in our connectional conversation across the California-Nevada Conference."

## *In The Military*

Please keep them in your prayers.

Chris Armantrout - US Navy

Nathan Ashlock - US Marines

Nick Buckridge - Army National Guard

Alex Campbell - Navy

Josh Caughran - Navy

Megan Darling - Army Reserves

Bradley Delacruz - Army

Kurt Droste - US Marines

Rebek'ah Fore - Navy

Jerome Garey - Air Force

Rebecca Garey - Air Force

Dan Hanel - US Air Force

Greg Hanel - US Air Force

Colin Harrigan - US Marine Corp

Kenneth Oberg - Navy

Ellis Redmond - Marine Corp

Tiela Roland - US Air Force

Joel Watson - Navy

Josephine Wells-Ashley - US Marines

Shon Willis - US Army

Spring Winters - US Air Force

Laura Yoon, David Yoon - US Navy

The pillar candle on the altar is to remind us of our prayers for them.