



The Masthead

The Newsletter of Mayflower United Church of Christ

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Office Hours: 9:00-1:00 Monday-Friday

December 2024

A glorious hope



Let us today go down to Bethlehem, and in company with wondering shepherds and adoring Magi, let us see him who was born King of the Jews, for we by faith can claim an interest in him, and can sing, “*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.*” Jesus is Jehovah incarnate, our Lord and our God, and yet our brother and friend; let us adore and admire. ...

Let us reverently bow before the holy Child whose innocence restores to [humankind] its ancient glory; and let us pray that he may be formed in us, the hope of glory.

—C.H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*

Look upon love



Let us then meditate upon the Nativity just as we see it happening in our own babies. I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh. Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify people. Inexpressible majesty will crush them. That is why God took on our human flesh and blood, that God should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor God would console and comfort us.

—Martin Luther

Special dates

First Sunday of Advent, *December 1, 2024*

Second Sunday of Advent, *December 8, 2024*

Third Sunday of Advent, *December 15, 2024*

First day of winter, *December 21, 2024*

Fourth Sunday of Advent, *December 22, 2024*

Christmas Eve, *December 24, 2024*

Christmas Day, *December 25, 2024*

New Year's Eve/Watch Night, *December 31, 2024*

The Incarnation

At the center of Christmas is Jesus, both fully God and fully man. "In Bethlehem, humility and glory in their extremes were joined," wrote pastor R.G. Lee (1886-1978). When Jesus came to earth, Lee explained, he descended:

- from the heights of glory to the depths of shame,
- from the wonders of heaven to the wickedness of earth,
- from exaltation to humiliation,
- from the throne to the tree,
- from dignity to debasement,
- from worship to wrath,
- from the halls of heaven to the nails of earth,
- from the coronation to the curse,
- from the glory place to the gory place!

"Born in a stable! Cradled in a cattle trough! Wrapped in swaddling clothes of poverty!" Lee wrote. "No room for him

who made all rooms! [No] place for him who made and knows all places! Oh, deep humiliation of the Creator — born of the creature, woman! But in his descent was the dawn of mercy. Because we cannot ascend to him, he descends to us."

Christian symbol



ADVENT COLORS — One of the season's symbolic colors is blue, representing hope. During Advent, we wait in hope to celebrate again God's coming in human form. We also look forward in hope to Christ's coming in glory at the end of the age. Purple symbolizes the royalty of Jesus, the coming Prince of Peace, and the penitence with which we receive him. Some congregations also use pink or white candles in Advent wreaths, with pink symbolizing joy and white symbolizing the Christ Child.

Use the gift!

At Christmas, God sent his Son to live among us. But he doesn't want us to be

passive recipients of that precious gift.
Consider these challenges for the
season — and for the new year ahead:

“He became what we are that we might
become what he is.”

—Athanasius (4th century)

“When Christ entered our world, he
didn’t come to brighten our Decembers
but to transform our lives.”

—Rich Miller

“Christmas began in the heart of God. It
is complete only when it reaches the
heart of man. Why wait for a call when
you have a command?”

—Robert Hughes

Bible Quiz



Who was governor of Syria when
Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem
for a mandated registration, or census?

- A. Theophilus
- B. Herod Antipas
- C. Pontius Pilate
- D. Quirinius

Answer: D (See Luke 2:1-7.)

The heart of Christmas

Sound over all waters, reach out from all
lands,

The chorus of voices, the clasping of
hands;

Sing hymns that were sung by the stars
of the morn,

Sing songs of the angels when Jesus
was born!

With glad jubilations

Bring hope to the nations!

The dark night is ending and dawn has
begun:

Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the
sun,

All speech flow to music, all hearts beat
as one! ...

Blow, bugles of battle, the marches of
peace;

East, west, north, and south let the long
quarrel cease.

Sing the song of great joy that the
angels began,

Sing of glory to God and of good-will to
man!

Hark! joining in chorus

The heavens bend o’er us!

The dark night is ending and dawn has
begun;

Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the
sun,

All speech flow to music, all hearts beat
as one!

BLUE CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICE

AT

MAYFLOWER UCC

2900 COUNTY BARN ROAD



CHRISTMAS IS NOT ALWAYS A JOYOUS TIME FOR EVERYONE. THIS YEAR ON THE 8TH OF DECEMBER AT 4 O'CLOCK, MAYFLOWER UCC WILL BE OFFERING A BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE. THIS WILL BE A QUIET, CONTEMPLATIVE SERVICE, BRINGING HOPE TO THOSE WHO FEEL PAIN AND GRIEF DURING THE HOLIDAYS.

THE SERVICE WILL BE OPEN TO EVERYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND.



Join Mayflower's Book Club for a Tour of The Holocaust Museum

To prepare for their discussion of The Little Liar by Mitch Albom, Mayflower's Book Club has arranged a private 90-minute docent-led tour of The Holocaust Museum (975 Imperial Golf Course Blvd. Suite #108) on Monday, January 13 at 10:00 am. Everyone in the congregation is invited to join the Book Club on the tour, which will be conducted during non-public hours. The cost is \$15, and the group size is limited to 25. Sign-up will be available in the Narthex. We can arrange to carpool from church.

The Little Liar by Mitch Albom tells the fictional story of four characters who experience the Holocaust from different perspectives. Their lives are forever changed by the deception and violence of one man and by a lie told by an innocent Jewish boy who had never before told a lie. The novel addresses the damaging effects of lies, the complexity of human relationships, and the widespread devastation of the Holocaust.

Mayflower's Book Club will discuss The Little Liar at their monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 4 at 7:00 pm. Everyone in the congregation is encouraged to attend and participate in this meaningful discussion.

Our Book Club would love to have you join us for the tour of The Holocaust Museum and/or the discussion of The Little Liar. If you have any questions or if you will not return to Naples until January and would like to sign up for the tour, call Judy Dudley in the office at 239-775-0055 and she will put you in touch with Shirley Smith.



A Mission Moment at the Guadalupe Center:

A ride through Immokalee was how our field trip started. The very enthusiastic guides, Elizabeth Cuevas and Emily Osterhaus picked us up at Mayflower church in their Guadalupe Center van for a very special tour.

Elizabeth and Emily visited our Mayflower church service on 9/29 and provided a wonderful presentation about the Guadalupe Center for our congregation. This is how our tour evolved in order for Mayflower members to see the

Center and deliver the books collected from our book drive for the children of the Guadalupe Center. If anyone is interested in attending a future tour please sign up on the list in the narthex and we will make the arrangements.

Several of our members loaded the van with "4 crates of books" that we collected for the children at the Guadalupe Center, all donated by our wonderful congregation.

It was a rainy trip all the way to Immokalee, but the conversation was filled with the bright beginnings of the Guadalupe Centers humble start in 1984

at a soup kitchen with homework help by a Sister from Our Lady of the

Guadalupe Church. Today the Center is reaching more than 1,901 students per year!

We learned so much about the families of Immokalee and their vast farming community. Immokalee means "*My Home*" and the pride we felt from both Emily and Elizabeth about these roots was so heart warming and inspiring.

From the colorful artistic murals greeting us as we entered the town to the migrant housing for many of their families, this was a very eye opening tour that helped us understand the many challenges these families face day to day.

Many of the small homes are crowded, hosting many more people than they are intended to, so not enough beds or blankets and quilts to go around. We learned how transient the farming jobs are and how some families might

travel far to other states to find work in seasonal crop fields in order to feed their family. Farming duties and picking crops is not always sensitive to the school schedules, just another huge challenge for the school and the children.

The van pulled into the Guadalupe Center, Van Otterloo Campus and we continued our tour into a beautiful facility where the children were attending their childcare program and preschool programs in state of the art classrooms.

We watched several classes enjoying their nutritious lunch and others preparing for library time. We learned more about the after-school tutoring programs for the first and second graders. This is accomplished by high school students being paired with the elementary students, a win-win arrangement fostering so many talents and sharpening their leadership skills.

The theme of helping each other grow, planting the seeds of generosity and compassion then watching the children thrive into young adults and come back full circle to 'my home' and give thanks to their beginnings was such an inspirational message. **"For the children of Immokalee, education is their way out of poverty, and Guadalupe Center is their vehicle".**

We would like to share some ideas about how we can continue to help and support this very important mission. Please see below a [Christmas List of the Children's gift ideas.](#) The lists are also available in the narthex.

If we could each bring an unwrapped gift by Dec 6th from the list to church, all will be collected in the Narthex and picked up by the Guadalupe Center.

We also mentioned the need for quilts and blankets that will be gifts to the families needing warmth and comfort in their difficult housing situations.

Thank you for your loving support ♡





Holiday Gift Shop Wish List

Infants and Toddlers

Activity, light up and musical toys Step 2, Baby Einstein and Leap Frog toys
 Infant gyms: Fisher-Price Deluxe Kick 'n Play Piano or a similar item
 Infant bouncers
 Stacking rings or cups
 Bath toys
 Baby dolls: various ethnicities
 Sit-to-stand toys
 Rattles, teethingers and small hand toys



School-Aged

Arts & Crafts sets
 Popular characters: Shopkins, Hatchimals, Pokemon, Disney, Marvel, Minecraft, etc. Cars and trucks: Matchbox, Hot Wheels; etc.
 LOL Surprise, and Polly Pockets (various ethnicities)
 Magnatiles
 Action figures: superheroes (non violent)
 LEGO'S, K'nex, Lincoln Logs, etc. Instruments: keyboards, guitars, drums
 Hearthsong Build-a-fort kits
 Play sticks
 Sports Gear: soccer balls, footballs, basketballs, etc.
 Science lab kits: Kinetic Sand, rockets, animals, microscopes, chemistry sets and slime baking
 Riding toys: street rollers, scooters and skateboards, etc.
 Board Games

Preschool – Aged

Play sets: toy kitchen, play food, toolbox, toy doctor's kit; etc. Remote controlled toys: cars, robots, helicopters, dinosaurs, etc.,
 Blocks: LEGO DUPLO, Mega Blocks and foam block sets, Play-Doh and Play-Doh toys
 Baby Dolls: various ethnicities, Toy cars and Trucks: auto garage, train set, Hot Wheels, etc
 Popular Characters: Paw Patrol, Marvel, Disney, Sesame Street, PL Masks, Shimmer & Shine, etc.
 Fisher-Price Little People Activity Sets
 V-Tech and Leap Frog toys, Board Games

Pre-Teens & Teens

Gift Cards: Amazon, Target, Walmart, Dunkin Donuts, McDonalds, Ulta and Gamestop (\$25 increments)
 Fujifilm Instax Cameras and film
 Water bottles (Hydroflask), Stanley, Owala)
 Hygiene sets
 Tie dye kits
 Bracelet making kits
 Portable chargers and power banks Board Games

Thank You & Happy Holidays!



We wish You a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!
You are invited to join Thrivent for our December 2024 Events.

DECEMBER 3, 2024 | 12:00 AM – 11:59 PM ET

[Giving Tuesday](#)

Donate. Participate. Celebrate. Giving Tuesday is an opportunity to make our communities stronger one act of giving at a time. Join us in supporting Family Promise on Tuesday, December 3. For every \$2 donated to Family Promise on Thrivent's giving platform and at in-person events, Thrivent will match \$1 up to a total of \$20,000.* Thrivent will also cover online processing fees so your gift makes an even greater impact.

*Donations made online to featured organizations through Thrivent's giving platform and at in-person events on Giving Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024, will be matched \$1 for every \$2 donated up to \$20,000 per Thrivent Member Network. Thrivent, in partnership with Thrivent Charitable Impact & Investing®, offers you the opportunity to make online personal donations to the organizations you care about.

RSVP - <https://bit.ly/GiveTuesday2024>

DECEMBER 10 THROUGH DECEMBER 25, 2024 | TWO WEEKS ONLY - ON DEMAND [Home for the Holidays](#) Join the Thrivent Member Network for Home for the Holidays, a virtual Christmas concert

featuring five-time Grammy® Award-winning artist, Steven Curtis Chapman. Take some time to treat yourself to the sounds of this joyous season. Grab your friends and family and sing along to your favorite Christmas classics.

This on-demand Concert is available for two weeks only – December 10-25.

RSVP -

<https://bit.ly/ThriventsHomeForTheHolidays>

DECEMBER 14, 2024

[Night Garden at Fairchild Botanical Garden](#)

Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden; 10901 Old Cutler Rd, Miami, FL 33156

We invite you to immerse yourself in Holiday Lights at the Fairchild Botanical Garden. Fairchild is transformed into an illuminated magical fairyland with colored pathways, Archie their favorite talkative wise old tree, and so much more, this light show extravaganza is the perfect way to celebrate the holidays with the entire family.

RSVP - <https://bit.ly/FairchildGarden2024>

Find more Events in and around Florida your family will enjoy at <https://bit.ly/ThriventEvents>.

No products will be sold at our events. For additional disclosures, see [Thrivent.com/social](https://thrivent.com/social).

Contact us at

SoutheastTMN@thrivent.com or see

what's happening at

thrivent.com/southeast or at

[Facebook.com/SoutheastTMN](https://facebook.com/SoutheastTMN).

For More Info Call Thrivent Financial Associate David Contessa at (239) 300-513



35th Anniversary of Mayflower Congregational UCC

January 1, 1990 – January 5, 2025

FRIENDS, FAMILY AND VISITORS ARE INVITED TO JOIN MAYFLOWER AS WE'RE CELEBRATING THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR FOUNDING! THERE WILL BE A PRE-SERVICE SLIDE SHOW, OF WHO AND WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE OVER THE PAST YEARS.

COME ABOUT 9:10 AM TO SEE IT FROM THE BEGINNING! THERE WILL BE A SERVICE OF COMMUNION AND SPECIAL REFRESHMENTS AFTERWARDS.

IN RECOGNITION OF THIS SPECIAL OCCASION, PLEASE CONSIDER A SPECIAL GIFT OF \$35 OR \$70 OR \$105)

December

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT	2	3 Book Club 7 pm	4 Potluck 5 pm	5 Nancy Moore - Birthday	6 Bell Ringers Rehearsal 9:30 am	7 Lou D'Amico - Birthday
8 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT Blue Christmas Service 4 pm	9 Stephanie McClung - Birthday	10	11	12	13	14 Marlin Whitney - Birthday David & Dorothy Besteman - Anniversary
15 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	16 Bob & Nina Ribinski - Anniversary	17	18	19	20 Theresa Rousseau - Birthday	21 FIRST DAY OF WINTER
22 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	23 Dianna Ford - Birthday	24 CHRISTMAS EVE	25  	26	27 Marilyn Dise - Birthday	28 Lee Krauss - Birthday Mike & Lou D'Amico - Anniversary Marlin & Gale Whitney - Anniversary
29 FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE				

