

# Celebrating Sixty Years in Ministry



## Merrell On The Move

### *Vision:*

Merrell UMC is a Christian community sharing the love of Jesus Christ through the practice of our gifts and graces to become Christian disciples of excellence. Christian disciples are believing and those yet to believe (Christians and pre-Christians) being transformed in a life giving faith community, living the gospel out of biblical learning, with inspirational worship, growing in generosity, committed to transform communities with our service and accepting God's presence for all people through prayer.

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+ Merrell United Methodist Church +

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The Reverend Bancroft L. Williams, Senior Pastor

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**Spirit-led • Equipped • Empowered • Disciples**

*Mission: To create Spirit-led, Equipped and Empowered Disciples for the world.*



## *Advent and Christmas Season of Change*

Advent Greetings To All!

Yes, this is time of lighting Advent candles. Advent encourages expectation for a season of change for the coming Christ. When seasons change, animals use visible and or bodily cues that indicate change is near and seek shelter. Birds fly to warmer places for the winter. Ant colonies store away food. The black bears store food in their body for use during hibernation. Change of seasons— there is a response to the expected.

This year as this congregation celebrate our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, God has breathed on us a season for change. It was a year as mission giving returned to intentional levels. Groups as well as the wider church contributed time, talent, treasures and witness to show love to God and neighbors near and far. Some areas we served included: the Florida Methodist Children's Home; Heifer International; Stop Hunger Now; Haiti Hurricane Appeal; Feeding community members; assisting with clothing items from Thrift Shop and a Back to School Health Fair.

Our members opened doors and hearts to any neighbor in search of a place to rest and be reshaped by faith in God. This is an area that God is speaking to us about. Advent into Christmas suggests reshaping faith in lives that need refreshment and hope located in Christ Jesus. The word to scared and uncomfortable Israel is the same to people thirsting for new life today. Isaiah 12:3 states:

**"...with Joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." (NIV)**

The implication here is that the salvation of the nation is in God (Exodus 15: 25, 27). Today, any saving act of God is the source or "well of salvation" from whom life giving water is derived (Psalm 36:9; Jeremiah 2:13; John 4:10). Advent recounts the Christian story of God's salvation available to change our lives. Participation in the change in Christ necessitates reshaping our total self and world perspective. John the Baptist in the synoptic gospels (Luke, Mark, and Matthew) told his hearers to produce righteous fruits in order to reshape hearts and lives. Is your heart being reshaped in love to totally trust Christ's rule? Can anyone see fruits of your being changed in Christ? In what ways can all of us welcome and work with "thirsty souls" to find joy as we drink from the well of salvation? Have a blessed Advent and Christmas 2016 as we share Christ's love in the baby who came to save.

From Christ's servant in ministry with the saints,

*Rev. Bancroft Williams*

# ADVENT: HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?

BY LIFEWAY.COM



It's Christmastime. How does your to-do list look?

## "Sales to Shop and Presents to Wrap"

There are sales to shop and presents to wrap. There are cards to send and decorations to unpack. There are parties to attend, events to plan, and trips to make. There are long lines, traffic, stress, delays, and expectations.

That's the time of year it is. It's Christmastime.

## "We Remember and Celebrate His Coming"

But in the midst of all this, we're supposed to remember that it's the time of Christ, the time we remember and celebrate His coming. What if there were a way to put aside all the trappings of Christmas so we could look forward to the joy of Christmas?

Well, there is.

## Advent: "The Reason for the Season"

For hundreds and hundreds of years, believers all over the world have observed Advent. For four Sundays before Christmas Day, Christians have paused to reflect on the longing Israel had for their coming Messiah, and the joy we as Christians have knowing He is with us.

The colors of [Advent](#) may seem strange to those of us used to the red and green of Christmas. Purple represents Christ's majesty. Pink, the hope of His appearance. And white, the promise that one day He will come again.

Christians have even sung Advent hymns many of us know as Christmas carols: hymns such as "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus," and "O Come, O Come, Immanuel."

## It's Time to Prepare Your Heart for Christmas

Every Christmas, Christians try to remember the "reason for the season." We struggle to hold onto the joy and peace we know is there, but that we often can't find amidst the clamor and urgency of the "holidays." Through Scripture readings, songs and prayers, Advent can become [a personal or family tradition](#) each year. Consider the value of an ancient spiritual tradition, one that can focus your mind on Christ and prepare your heart for Christmas.





**WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS  
INTO THE NEW YEAR**

*Peace and love in Christ be with you!*

*Because of the unique times of this year's calendar, a few adjustments have been made to our worship services this holiday season.*

<b>DATE</b>	<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
December 24	Christmas Eve CandleLight	6:30 p.m.
December 25	Combined Worship	9:00 a.m.
December 31	Watch Night	10:00 p.m.
January 1	Combined Worship	10:00 a.m.

*Please note that there will be no 8:00 a.m. services for the season.*

*Share these times with family and friends. Also keep these worship events in our prayers.*

*Blessing to all.*

*Rev. Bancroft Williams*

*Senior Pastor- Merrell UMC*



# Generosity

Cliff Leitch, [www.ChristianBibleReference.org](http://www.ChristianBibleReference.org)

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (NIV, Romans 12:6-10)

Each of us has something to offer to someone in need. We can give our money and our time to charity, be a friend to someone who is sick or lonely, do volunteer work, or be a peacemaker. We may give unselfishly of our time to our spouse, children or parents. We may choose a service-oriented occupation, or we may just do our everyday jobs with integrity and respect for others. It would seem that the more we give to others, the poorer we become, but just the opposite is true! Service to others brings meaning and fulfillment to our lives in a way that wealth, power, possessions and self-centered pursuits can never match. As Jesus said,

For if you give, you will get! Your gift will return to you in full and overflowing measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use to give -- large or small -- will be used to measure what is given back to you." (TLB, Luke 6:38)

Helping those in need is one of the major themes of the Bible and of Jesus' ministry. As far back as the thirteenth century B.C., the Hebrews' law institutionalized assistance to the poor:

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God. (NRSV, Leviticus 19:9-10)

Through service, we give others the things they lack, and we find meaning and fulfillment to our own lives. Both the Old and New Testament writings give many examples of the importance of service and charity:

He who despises his neighbor sins, but happy is he who is gracious to the poor. (NAS, Proverbs 14:21)

"Feed the hungry! Help those in trouble! Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you shall be as bright as day. And the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy you with all good things, and keep you healthy too; and you will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring. (TLB, Isaiah 58:10-11)

But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? (NAS, 1 John 3:17)

The Bible tells us to share generously with those in need, and good things will come to us in turn. We are not meant to live hard-hearted or self-centered lives. This is never made clearer than in Matthew 25:31-46. (Appendix 3) A greedy, miserly life leaves us devoid of anything but an empty craving for more possessions, more power or more status.

He who gives to the poor will never want, but he who shuts his eyes will have many curses. (NAS, Proverbs 28:27)

It is not necessary to be a wealthy philanthropist or a full-time volunteer to make a meaningful contribution. Rather, we should give generously of whatever wealth and abilities we have, no matter how small the amount.

And [Jesus] looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw a certain poor widow putting in two small copper coins. And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on." (NAS, Luke 21:1-4)

Finally, our good deeds should be motivated by a sincere desire to help others. Public recognition should not be the goal.

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. (NIV, Matthew 6:1-2)

Each of us has something to give. Some have wealth, some have talents, some have time. Whatever gifts we have been given -- large or small -- we should share generously. When we do, we make the world better for someone else and find true meaning and satisfaction in our own lives.

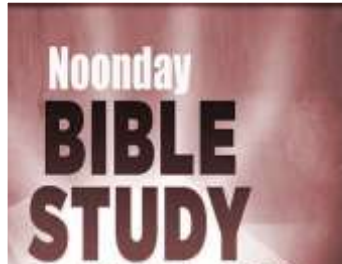


### Sunday Worship Times

Contemporary Worship	8:00AM	Sanctuary
Adult Bible Study	9:00AM	East Lounge
New Members Class	9:10AM	Room 17
Youth Bible Study	9:30AM	Ragsdale Hall
Traditional Worship	10:00AM	Sanctuary
Every Fourth Sunday	6:00PM	Sanctuary

### WEEKLY EVENTS

Bible Study	Monday	7:00PM	Ragsdale Hall
Bible Study	Tuesday	Noon	Chapel
Prayer Meeting	Tuesday	6:30PM	Sanctuary
Men's Choir	Wednesday	7:00PM	Music Room
Dance Rehearsal	Wednesday	7:00PM	Ragsdale Hall
Dunamis Youth	Friday	7:00PM	Ragsdale Hall
Choir Rehearsal	Saturday	4:00PM	Music Room



### Bible Studies

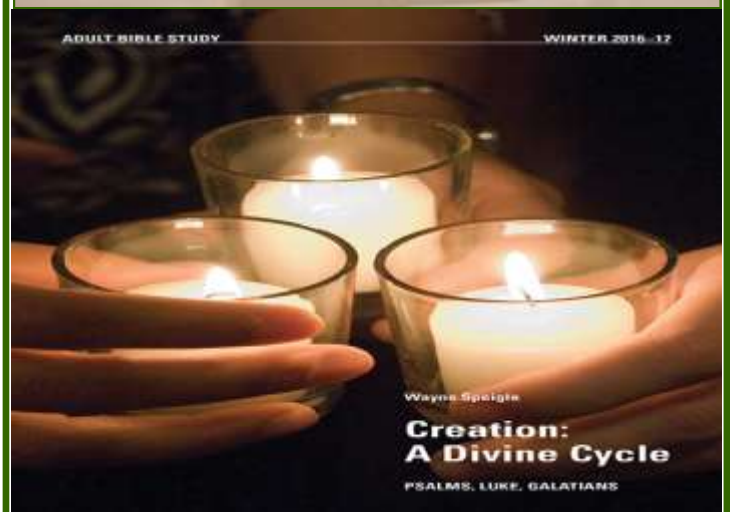
Pastor Bancroft invites everyone to join him every *Monday night at 7:00pm in Ragsdale Hall* and again in the *Chapel on Tuesday at 12 Noon*.

Our church is focus this year is ***"Discerning God's Leading"*** With this in mind, Pastor will be leading our Bible Studies on ***"Listening to God"*** by Carolyn Nystrom. Some of the areas he will cover are:

- Responsibility of a God Listener
- Listening to Understand
- Listening to the God who hears
- Holy Help in Listening
- Listening as Self-Discipline

***Together let us "Discern God's Leading" by listening to God to become Spirit-led, Equipped and Empowered Disciples for the world. That is our mission at MUMC.***

### ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL



#### Creation: A Divine Cycle

#### ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Calling all saints, ladies and gentlemen, to come out and study the Word. It is critical to our spiritual maturity.

When: **Every Sunday morning at 9am**

Where: **in the East Lounge**

Topics: The Savior has been born

#### **Praise from and for God's Creation**







The Birthing of a New Community

**This quarter's lessons reminds us that with the Advent of the Savior, Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, God set in motion the fulfillment of the divine plan of Salvation.**

**Through Luke's gospel, the Psalms, and the epistle to the Galatians, we will explore God's ongoing actions in blessing and reconciling the whole of Creation.**

# Announcements & Events

## DECEMBER 2016

<b>MON</b> <b>5</b>  <b>Bread Cart Ministry</b> 2:00—3:00 PM RAGSDALE	<b>TUE</b> <b>06</b> <b>SPPRC</b> There will not be a meeting of the committee on Tuesday,	<b>THU</b> <b>08</b>  <b>LYDIA CIRCLE</b> 7:00pm Ragsdale
<b>sat</b> <b>10</b> Evangelism ministry Saturday, 10:30am—room 17	<b>sat</b> <b>10</b>  <b>UNITED METHODIST MEN</b> meeting 3:00pm room 17	<b>THU</b> <b>15</b> <b>Trustees committee mtg</b> 7:30PM—ROOM 17
<b>sat</b> <b>17</b> worship ministry 10:30am—room 17	<b>SAT</b> <b>17</b>  <b>UMW advent service</b> 3:00PM RAGSDALE HALL	<b>MON</b> <b>19</b>  <b>Bread Cart Ministry</b> 2:00—3:00 PM
<b>tue</b> <b>20</b>  <b>RUTH CIRCLE social</b> 12:00 NOON RUBY TUESDAY lauderhill	<b>tue</b> <b>20</b> Finance ministry meeting 7:00pm—room 17	<b>wed</b> <b>21</b> Preschool Board mtg wednesday, December 21 7:00pm—room 17



## FARM SHARE



Church family, we want to start 2017 by adding an important outreach ministry to our roster. We have partnered with Farm Share, a large-scale, nonprofit food bank in Homestead that distributes free fresh produce and other foodstuff.

For Merrell, this ministry will connect to our community in a most personal way. And it is a wonderful opportunity to share the love of God through Christ.

We are now seeking volunteers to assist in packaging and distributing the groceries to help the needy in our community. Pastor Bancroft is appealing to those so moved to share the love of Christ to sign up in the Narthex or call the office.

We need drivers, packers, workers to help with the distribution - anyone who wants to help with this very important ministry. Please pray about this and search your hearts to see whether you can help. God bless you in this Advent season.



Susan Williams 12/01  
 John Thomas 12/02  
 Madge Dixon 12/02  
 Kevin Campbell 12/02  
 Natasha Ellis 12/02  
 Chrystal Smith 12/02  
 Carlton Thomas 12/03  
 Zayne McNally 12/03  
 Tanishe McDonald 12/04  
 Devante Thompson 12/04  
 Vivia Snagg 12/05/  
 Beverly Vaughan 12/05  
 Mable Alleyne 12/06/  
 Carol Henry 12/06  
 Richard Stirling 12/06  
 Ceceline Marriott 12/07  
 Fay Mullings 12/08  
 Phillipa Daniels 12/08  
 Marcia Legg 12/10  
 Susan Hanson-Lindo 12/10

Cynthia Burrough 12/11  
 Veronica Holder 12/12  
 Diana Dann 12/12  
 Coral Batson 12/13  
 Donald Panton 12/13  
 Nellie Simmonds 12/14  
 Hyacinth Prendergast 12/14  
 Webster Royes 12/15/  
 Trecea Thomas 12/15  
 Sheryl Young 12/17  
 Cherile Fahie 12/17  
 Vivienne Wray 12/18  
 Vivia McKnight 12/20  
 Chauntel Gayle 12/20  
 Fitzldret Edwards 12/21  
 Hyacinth Perry 12/21  
 Monica Campbell 12/21  
 Gabriel Henry 12/21

Eula Breary 12/21  
 Chaldean Davis 12/23  
 Christina Lawrence 12/23  
 Allison Lewis 12/23  
 Norma White 12/24  
 Michelle Drake 12/24  
 De'Mone Francis 12/24  
 Donald Henriques 12/25  
 Dacia Myrie 12/25  
 Hyacinth Butler 12/26  
 Natash Henry 12/26  
 Janae Sapp 12/27  
 Bancroft Williams 12/28  
 Janel Gordon 12/28  
 Arlene Brooks 12/29  
 Arlene Brooks 12/29  
 Gillian Peterkin 12/30

**+ The Staff +**

**The Rev. Bancroft Leighton Williams, Pastor**

Email: pastorbancroft@merrellumc.org  
 Claudette Meatley, Certified Church Administrator  
 Email: claudette@merrellumc.org  
 Bro. Louis Trotman, Director of Music  
 Sis. Shirley Smith, Director Preschool  
 Email: Preschool@merrellumc.org  
 Mr. Leroy Satchell, Custodian

**MEMBERSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP**

Merrell welcomes interested persons to become members.  
 We invite you to contact the Pastor by calling the Church Office.

**BAPTISMS**

Performed at the Sunday Service, contact the Church Office.

**MARRIAGES**

Performed after consultation with the Pastor

In time of **illness or sorrow**, please call the Pastor  
 or the Church Office promptly.

Visit our website

[www.merrellumc.org](http://www.merrellumc.org)

**Our Church Leaders**

**Church Council**

Sis. Eileen Tucker

**Lay Leader**

Sis. Patricia Tabois

**Lay Member to Annual Conference**

Sis. Lorna Smith

**Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee**

Sis. Diana Dann

**Adm. Assistant to Pastor**

Sis. Claudette Meatley

**Finance Committee**

Bro. Wayne Ranger

**Treasurer**

Bro. Eric Royes

**Financial Secretary**

Sis. Norma Williamson

**Prayer Ministry**

Sis. Uliet Black

**Trustee**

Bro. Franklyn Coombs

**Evangelism/Outreach Ministries**

Sis. Valerie Henry

**Preschool Board Chair**

Sis. Thelma McGeachy

**United Methodist Women**

Sis. Thelma McGeachy

**United Methodist Men**

Bro. Lovell McKail

**Visitation Ministry**

Sis. Dizzierene Cox

**Stewardship**

Bro. Winston Chang

**New Members Committee**

Sis. Rose Farquharson

**Membership Secretary**

Sis. Rowena Martin

**Campus Ministry**

**Representative**

Sis. Judith Gohagen

**Disaster Coordinator**

Bro. Lovell McKail

**Worship Ministries**

Sis. Deloris Ellis

**Youth**

Judy Gohagen

Keisha Coombs-Newman

**Thrift Shop**

Interim Coordinator

Sis. Phylis Brown

Bulletin Announcement Forms are available in the church office area on the office door. Please return form(s) via email: [office@merrellumc.org](mailto:office@merrellumc.org) or place it in the box on the office door. Deadline for announcements: **WEDNESDAY at NOON.**