



Meridian United Methodist
Church of the
Warm Heart

FOOTPRINTS



December 2024

LOVING ALL. CHANGING HEARTS. TRANSFORMING LIVES.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:30 a.m.
11:15 a.m.

Both services are broadcast online.

**Tuesday Afternoon
Bible Study**
2:00 p.m.

SERMON SERIES December 2024

12.01.2024

Adventures in Advent

Romans 8:24-24; John 15:9-12



12.08.2024

Christmas Cards

II Corinthians 3rd 1-6



12.15.2024

Colors of the Season

Acts 4:8-12



12.22.2024

Candy Canes

Psalm 23:1-2; Revelation 22:1-2



12.24.2024

Let it Go!

Luke 2:1-20

HIGHLIGHTED HAPPENINGS

Be sure to join us for these special events,
held each Wednesday evening of advent.



All-Church Potluck & Hanging of the Greens

December 4, 6:30 p.m. in the FLC

Same name, new event! There won't be a
worship service, but after dinner we'll all
help get the place Christmas-ready!

Warm Heart Movie Night!

December 11, 6:30 p.m. in the FLC

Bring a blanket or lawn chair
to watch "Home Alone" in the FLC!
We'll bring the popcorn!



Blue Christmas

December 17, 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

In the darkest time of the year, we acknowledge
that the Advent season may bring grief and
sadness. This service gives sacred space to
these feelings and offers healing and hope.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

December 24, 5, 7, and 11 p.m. in the Sanctuary

And of course, don't forget to join us on Christmas Eve for our
annual candle lighting services at 5, 7, and 11 p.m. (fear not, you
don't have to come to all three).

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

On Sunday, December 29, we will offer just one morning service at
10 a.m. There will be no Sunday School during this service, but
activity bags will be available for children. This will be a hymn sing
service similar to the one we enjoyed this past summer.

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STAFF

- Senior Pastor** (ext. 104)
Rev. Mike Benischek pastormike@meridianumc.com
- Minister of Congregational Care** (ext. 105)
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- Minister of Worship Arts** **208-608-2520**
Debbie Jones worshiparts@meridianumc.com
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- Facility Personnel**
Dave Scarpellini maintenance@meridianumc.com (M - Th)
Don Woods dandwoods@gmail.com (F - Sun)

November

NEW MEMBERS:

DEATHS:

Please pray for the families of...

BAPTISMS:

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

- Administrative Council Chair** Dennis Moberly
Staff Pastor Parish Relations Chair Margaret Pridmore
Trustees Chair Ron Pridmore
Systems Administrator Integrity Computer Consultants
Finance Chair Lori Jones
Treasurer Lori Jones
Financial Secretary Diane Brister
Futures Team Chair Lori Jones
United Methodist Men President Ed Emmel
United Women in Faith President Dixie Jacky
Lay Chaplain Coordinator Faye Gabriel
Lay Chaplains Emma Jean Bedsole, Phyllis & Gordon Bouza, Don Brister, Faye Gabriel, Ruth Hayes, Gary Himes, Donna Melville, Lisa Miller, Carole Ravine, Mary Rich, Carol Rounds, Eloise Stemple
Health and Wellness Co-Coordinators
 Lisa Miller, Sue Mattison

CHURCH INFORMATION

MERIDIAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

240 E. Idaho Ave. Meridian, ID 83642
235 E. Pine Ave. Meridian, ID 83642 - Mailing Address
 Phone: **208.888.2245** Fax: **208.888.5741**
 Email: office@meridianumc.com
 Website: www.meridianumc.com
 Facebook: **Meridian United Methodist Church**

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
 Friday: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Prayer & Praise Requests - prayer@meridianumc.com

Calling All Kids (and Kids at Heart)!



Every year we feature drawings from our Warm Heart Kids on our Christmas Eve bulletins! Grab a submission form in the Narthex and drop off completed drawings in the church office. Adults are welcome to participate too!

PASTOR MIKE'S MUSINGS

Warm Heart Family,

In a memory box that has treasures of my 51 years, I have a few Christmas cards from my grandparents. It might sound weird, but it's nice to see their signatures and to hold a card that I know they held. I also have a few notes from my parents in their handwriting. Similarly, I've kept and saved a few voicemails from family now long-gone, just in case I ever want to hear their voice again. I hold close to my heart a few of these tangible artifacts from days gone by. And I know I'm not alone in this practice.

One tradition my family practices is sending out Christmas cards each year. Nowadays, they are simple picture cards of our family, but I remember handwriting our letters a few years ago. Cards are a nice way to stay in touch with family and friends you haven't seen in a while, if not years. Sure, we are connected by Facebook or other social media, but it's hard to treasure a text message or a social media post.

This year, our family will try to send out cards to our whole church family. Whether you attend in person or online, we want to include you! If you're not in our current directory, please send me an e-mail (revbenny@aol.com) so we can get you on our nice list! If it's been a while since you've checked your address with the office, please send them an e-mail (office@meridianumc.com) to update.

While we hope our list will be comprehensive, I'm sure that we might end up missing a few names and addresses. If you fit in this category, please forgive me—we are so excited that you are part of the Warm Heart family, and we are so grateful for you.

From our house to yours, may your Advent be filled with love and light. May you know you are cherished. And check your mailbox for a card in the next few weeks!

Pastor Mike
pastormike@meridianumc.com

P.S. I'd love it if you would join me for some Christmas caroling at the 7th Annual Interfaith Drive-thru Food Drive. It will be held in the parking lot of Vertical View Gym on Sunday, December 8, and I'll be leading carols from 2 - 3 p.m. Let's spread some Christmas cheer! Maybe we'll sing some of these classic songs pictured below. Can you name them all?



MINISTRIES & NEWS

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Hello Warm Heart families!

December is a special time of year, filled with joy, kindness, and generosity. As we enter the season of Advent and celebrate the birth of Jesus, I'm reminded of the importance of giving and sharing love with those around us.

In the midst of gift-giving, decorating, and festive celebrations, let's not forget the true meaning of Christmas. Jesus taught us that love and kindness are the greatest gifts we can give. As we prepare to celebrate his birth, let's focus on spreading love, kindness, and joy to those around us.

Here are some ways you and your family can give and show love during this special season:

volunteer; visit the elderly or those in nursing homes; donate to a charity or cause that's close to your heart; make handmade gifts or cards for loved ones; smile and show kindness to those you meet

While we are on break from our Wednesday evening Bible Builders, we invite you and your family to join us for our family friendly all-church events:

Dec 4 - Potluck in the FLC & decorating the Sanctuary
Dec 11 - Enjoy a movie and popcorn in the FLC

Christmas Program: On Sunday, December 15, during the 11:15 service, the kiddos will perform their Christmas skit during Children's Time. We will have one more practice on Wednesday, December 11, at 6pm before the family movie.

Take care,

Malia Paz
children@meridianumc.com



Warm Heart Kids celebrate Christ the King Sunday

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Welcome to December! The church has lots of things going on this month, including All-Church Wednesday activities each week before Christmas, Advent candle lighting at every service, and of course the three traditional services (5, 7, and 11) on Christmas Eve. As this is a busy time of year for families, we go light on the youth group events, but we look forward to our annual Mac and Cheese Christmas Party and there are still opportunities for us to get involved in some service!

Events for **all youth**:

Sunday, Dec 8 – Mac & Cheese Christmas Party
5 - 7 p.m., FLC

Service opportunities for all youth:

Tuesday, December 10 – Backpack Program
3:30 – 4:30ish p.m., Meridian Food Bank

Sunday, December 15 – Veterans Footlocker Sorting
12:15 p.m., Youth Room (this usually takes about 30 minutes)

Monday, December 16 – Veterans Footlocker Drop-Off
4:30 p.m., Idaho State Veterans Home

This year we will be presenting our church's donations in the dining room and then accompanying some veterans on a night lights tour around Boise.

With joy,

Nicole Walker
youth@meridianumc.com



Seven of our youth attended the conference's Next Steps East Retreat in November!

MINISTRIES & NEWS

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

*Give thanks to the God of heaven
His love endures forever.
- Psalm 136:26*

"November is the month to be thankful," I thought to myself as I contemplated what to write for this month's newsletter. "But it's December! I should think of something else to write about!"

"Why?" God whispered to me: "Lisa, we should be thankful and grateful all year long."

So I share with you the verse on my heart, Psalm 136:26.

This year's Turkey Box drive was a huge success thanks to all of you. We sure are the Church of the Warm Heart! We were able to help feed hundreds of families a holiday meal. I want to give a huge shout out to Carla Carlson for helping me with all the details of this project. I am surely thankful and blessed! I've included some photos of our Warm Heart Family pitching in to load up the boxes. Great work, team!

Blessings and good health,

Lisa Miller
care@meridianumc.com



Ladies Night Out

Let's spend an evening in friendship and laughter. On Tuesday, Dec 10, we will meet at Joan Lindsay's beautiful home at 5 p.m. for our annual Christmas party. Bring a dessert or appetizer to share and an ornament to exchange. RSVP with Lisa Miller

Christmas Adopt-a-Family

We have a long-running ministry at the Church of the Warm Heart where we help families in need have a merry Christmas. If you know a local family who could use a little help buying presents this year (they don't have to be members of the church!), you can send your nominations to Malia Paz (children@meridianumc.com) or Lisa Miller (care@meridianumc.com).



You can donate towards this ministry either online or with a check marked "Adopt-a-family".

On Sunday, November 24, we loaded all fifty turkey boxes (plus the frozen turkeys and bags of potatoes) into two trucks. Many hands made light work!



MINISTRIES & NEWS

MUSIC MINISTRY

It's always a joy for me to line up music for Advent. We have so many talented musicians in our church and community! I hope that you will be blessed by all the pieces shared this month. I wish I could highlight all the December offerings in this newsletter article, but there is simply not enough space, so I will use this opportunity to emphasize our two Christmas "programs" in the coming weeks.

The **Angels Alive Children's Choir** will present *Footprints to the Manger* at the 11:15 a.m. service on December 15. This little pageant includes a skit, lots of Scripture verses, and several songs. Come enjoy watching our kids present what they've been working on!

It's Cantata time! The Celebration Choir will be offering *A Christmas Carol in Bethlehem* by Anna Laura Page and Jean Anne Shafferman on Sunday, December 22, at the 9:30 a.m. service. This cantata imagines Scrooge as the owner of the inn where Mary and Joseph sought shelter the night of Jesus' birth. We hope you'll join us for this special time.

Blessings,

Debbie Jones
worshiparts@meridianumc.com

P.S. The **Rolling Tones Chime Choir** will be playing for residents at Spring Gardens Senior Living this month. How awesome that are youth are able to share their music with folks in our community!

FINANCIAL NEWS

I am composing this article on Tuesday, November 26. This means the numbers to the right are current as of the end of October, but they do not really give you a picture as to where we stand as we head to the Advent season and the final month of the year. In early November, a challenge was issued in the form of a match of giving above your normal gift up to \$5,000. A second donor offered the same challenge, which means if met would net an additional \$20,000 to the general fund. I am happy to announce that we have met the challenges and these additional gifts will be reflected in an update next month. I don't normally give you numbers until the books are closed, but I am going to do that this month. (Give me a break, I am an old man and deserve to have my way on occasion.) With one week left in November, we have already received more than \$75,000. These gifts will bring us closer to a break even point before we welcome 2025.

For General Operations:	Oct 2024	Year to Date 2024
Given	\$61,604	\$527,265
Need	\$53,294	\$589,381
Outcome	\$8,310	(\$62,116)

Each of you received a letter signed by me and our Pastor. Please read it and pray about it. We have a chance once again to finish the year with a surge and wipe out our current deficit. I am always impressed at the ability of this congregation to meet all challenges and special requests when presented. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU. Let's finish strong in this last month. It is always nice to start the year with a surplus—or at least not in the hole.

Our staff and all the committees that must present or approve funds regarding our budget have been working diligently, and I am happy to report that the 2025 budget has been approved. The full budget will be presented for all to see early in the year. I feel confident that each of you will be impressed by the realistic and attainable numbers you will see. I also know that everyone involved in the process takes their responsibilities seriously and many hours of prayer and discussion were a vital part of this exercise.

Since this writing session is before Thanksgiving, I would like to wish each of you a Happy Belated Turkey Day as well as a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year. It will be a happy one for me if we can finish in the black. Please continue to pray for our staff, our programs, and our families who may be traveling during the holidays.

If you have any questions regarding our finances, please don't hesitate to contact Lori Jones, Finance Committee Chair, at hjones2021@gmail.com, or me, Don Brister, Stewardship Chair, at maroontycoon63@gmail.com.

See 'ya next year!

MINISTRIES & NEWS

THE BOOK NOOK

Claudia Moberly

Christmas is coming soon, and if there are little ones on your Christmas list (or big ones who love picture books), here are some ideas from the United Women in Faith Reading List.



Stay This Way Forever, by Linsey Davis, illustrated by Lucy Fleming, celebrates the joy, wonder, and innocence of childhood with this love letter to the little ones in your life. It captures the tender joy parents and grandparents feel about the endearing qualities their children exhibit — curiosity, innocence, open-hearted love, and imagination. The beautiful illustrations match the mood of wonder and love, celebrating special moments like bedtime, an outdoor walk, and singing by a campfire. From beginning to end, it is a celebration of the special time of early childhood, and a recognition that it passes all too quickly.

Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey, by Margaret Ruurs, artwork by Nizar Ali Badr. This beautiful picture book, which is written in both English and Arabic, shares the story of a family forced to flee their once peaceful village torn apart by the Syrian civil war. The family ultimately finds a new place to call home. "The lucky ones, they call us. New memories, new hopes, new dreams. Not of war, but of peace."

You Have A Voice, by Vera Ahiyya, illustrated by Fabiana Faiallo. Ahiyya has taught Kindergarten and first grade for 16 years, and realizes the power of early teaching to change the world. Her book celebrates the capacity every child naturally holds to use their voice to make changes for good. The delightful illustrations invite children (and adults) to delight in differences, to speak up when they see injustices, and to open their hearts to all of God's children.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Dixie Jacky, UWF President

Please join us for our annual Christmas party and luncheon on Saturday, December 14, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. in the FLC. We will once again be welcoming the Boise Choristers and enjoying their wonderful and entertaining Christmas musical presentation. Call the church office by Wednesday, December 11, to make your reservation.



The Christmas luncheon is also an opportunity for us to wrap up this year of ministry by awarding our Special Mission Recognition Pin, and one last service opportunity: this year, if you feel so inclined, we ask that you bring an adult or child-sized stocking hat and/or gloves (new or gently used) for Joseph's Closet.

And with this year of ministry coming to a close, we begin looking ahead to next year! We have selected Micah 6:8 as the scripture which will be the focus of next year's programming...

"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

Unit meetings will continue to be held on Saturdays and book club meetings will be held on Thursdays. Watch this space for the specifics.



Did you know December 3 is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities? And that our pledges and donations support a partnership grant for this day with the World Council of Churches? Additionally, this month our unit pledges and donations support...

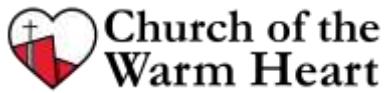
- an "Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline" partnership building grant with the Children's Defense Fund
- the Kapatiran-Kaunlaran Foundation in the Philippines, to establish a community farm in Bulacan province



Please don't forget to continue supporting our local mission project of Mirror Image. Hygiene items can be dropped off at Lisa's office in the FLC, and cash is always welcome.



Make your checks to the church (not United Women in Faith) and put in the memo line: Mirror Image. There is a lot of need out there, and one or two (or more!) items each month are so helpful for all the youth we are supporting.



**Church of the
Warm Heart**

Meridian United Methodist Church
235 E. Pine Avenue
Meridian, ID 83642

December Events to Celebrate!

Please watch the E-Blast and Facebook for additional church events.

- December 4 – Potluck & Hanging of the Greens (6:30 p.m., FLC)*
- December 8 – Christmas Caroling (2 p.m., Vertical View Gym)*
- December 8 – Youth Group Christmas Party (5 p.m., FLC)*
- December 11 – Movie Night (6:30 p.m., FLC)*
- December 14 – UW Faith Luncheon (11:30 a.m., FLC)*
- December 18 – Blue Christmas Service (6:30 p.m., Sanctuary)*
- December 24 – Christmas Eve Services (5, 7, & 11 p.m.)*
- December 25 – Merry Christmas!*
- December 29 – 10 a.m. service only*

January

NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE:

Friday,

December 27th

Submissions may be
emailed to Jacob Walker at
cc@meridianumc.com

or brought by the
church office.

Thank you!

