



# OCUMC Newsletter

December 10, 2020



Dear friends and family of OCUMC:

No, you're pastor didn't email you.

I know that sounds as a negative in this holiday season. But "Tis the season" could also mean that this is the season of scammers and tricksters.

In the past few weeks, there has been an uptick in my colleagues reporting that their church has been hit by scammers. When it comes to churches and other non-profits, fraudsters are most eager to take advantage of the benevolence and trusting nature of those involved. This is even truer during the holiday season where your generosity is perceived as a weakness by these people.

Unfortunately, a lot of our contact information is online. Fraudsters can hack into our accounts (or create like-named accounts) and solicit from our congregations.

**YOUR PASTOR WILL NOT ASK YOU TO BUY GIFT CARDS AND EMAIL BACK THE CODES AND PIN.** We might ask for gift cards (in the newsletter or announcements) for our Christmas families or give out gift cards to help someone out - but we will not covertly send you a message asking for you to buy a \$100 Target gift card and ask that you send back the numbers.

Also, **your pastor was not abducted or stranded in a foreign country** and need your bail money to get back into the states. I also won't send random texts asking "Are you available right now for a confidential conversation?"

A year ago, I had a wedding couple (whom I had only conversed online) send me a check for \$2,000 (by mistake, they said). They asked for me to send back a check for \$1,900 to refund their check. Of course it was a scam - I didn't even try to cash the \$2,000. Funny, there was no wedding...

Please be careful out there. Be very skeptical of any giving requests you receive online through email or social media. While the request may look like it is coming from an official source, it may not be real, as it may be the result of a hacked or spoofed account. Your best defense against fraudulent email is a healthy amount of skepticism - and contact the church office (don't respond back on the email link).

Online fraud is a frustrating and disappointing part of life today. It is pervasive in part because of its success in capitalizing on good and generous people. Let's do what we can to protect our flock from this cyber-threat so that we can all enjoy this holiday season fully.

No, your pastor didn't email you - although I see the irony in sending this out in a newsletter. And if I am stuck in a foreign country asking for bail money, could someone please inform my wife? I might have a lot of explaining to do!

See you in virtual church this Sunday!

Pastor Mike

# *Christmas Family Project*

**2020**



## *Thank You*

The Thursday Ladies' Christmas Family Project Committee wants to take this time to thank everyone who helped make our event a success, especially in a very challenging pandemic year serving sixteen family units of various sizes. First, Jane Myers worked as a coordinator with our partner, Love Inc. and also coordinated with Mary Gifford and our finance office plus the Women's Ministries Team

and Mission Possible Team who both supplied donations and workers and our Church office that helped with notices and information.. We could not have succeeded without them. We cannot forget our marvelous committee either for their generous donations of their own money and countless hours of shopping at a time when shopping is not easily done, all done with a happy cheerful and passionate spirit of giving.

And last but not least, to our loving congregation who contributed monetary funds, gift cards, and other items, plus numerous prayers, we are grateful. May we all enjoy our Advent Season, and delight in the participation of a very merry sharing Christmas season at OCUMC.

Thank You with love and hope always.

Dawn Engel





**BIRTHDAYS**

**Birthdays**

POFF, MARGARET	12/01
PARKINSON, KITSIE	12/06
CRAVEN, MARY	12/10
KELLEY, HELEN	12/14
EVANS, GAYLEN	12/15
MAGEE, LESLI	12/16
EVANS, NICHOLAS	12/20
BENISCHEK, CHRISTIAN	12/21
BEVENS, ZON JR.	12/21
THONSTAD, TED	12/21
DUVALL, DWAYNE	12/22
OLIVAS, ALISON	12/23
JOHNSTON, CAITLIN	12/25
BUTTOLPH, GERALD	12/27
STREIGHT, PAT	12/27
TONOLE, DON	12/27
DURST, JULIE	12/30

**Last call for Advent Scripture readers, worship hosts, children's message givers, etc.! Words already written out... Call or text Pastor Mike at 503-522-9807**



# Stroll Through Christmas

Take a stroll through our beautiful Sanctuary and see an array of decorated vignettes and stations for a fun Christmas event at our church.

We ask that you register in advance; please call the church office at 503-656-3433 to choose your date and time, appointments available in 15 minute increments:

Sunday, December 20 <sup>th</sup>	3:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Monday, December 21 <sup>st</sup>	4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, December 22 <sup>nd</sup>	4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, December 23 <sup>rd</sup>	4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Thursday, December 24 <sup>th</sup>	4:00 – 6:30 p.m.

## **Social distancing and face masks are required**

*Please help us by donating non-perishable food items to help benefit those in need. All donations will go to the HOPE Food Pantry.*



## *Advent Mailboxes*

Save the postage! Put your church family holiday greetings in the mailbox located in the Church Lobby starting in December. Put the cards in the box labeled with the first initial of the last name. Don't forget to check for your cards!

## *Christmas Eve Candlelight Prayer in the Parking Lot*

Thursday, December 24, 6:30pm.

Join us for a Christmas Eve Candlelight Prayer as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. We will gather in the church parking lot for this very special Prayer that you won't want to miss! Please dress warmly.



*Christmas Eve*