



Saguache

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Corner of Christy and 6th
P. O. Box 184, Saguache, Colorado 81149 • Church E-Mail: umcofcenter@gmail.com

Rev. Debria Upton
Pastor

December 7, 2020

Greetings and Grace and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

Thank you to all you who joined our 8:30 am Zoom worship as well as those who joined via Facebook and Zoom, or our 10:30 am morning Zoom and Facebook worship. I appreciate Charleen Schaeffer for being our 8:30 am online liturgist. Thank you all so much for your willingness to serve. What a blessing to see everyone in worship. I do appreciate the kindness and grace of all of those who were present virtually Sunday. I tried to make the church as Christmassy as I could because I know how difficult it is not to be present personally in worship.

I have been in touch with Saguache County public health department and our numbers are decreasing. If everyone will do what is necessary, it is my hope that we will be able to have in-person Blue Christmas service on the longest night, December 21, 2020 at 6:30 pm in the Center UMC sanctuary. I would invite you to join us either virtually or in person, especially if you have lost a loved one this year. Another thing very special this year on December 21st is that you can witness something that hasn't been seen in nearly 800 years – the “Christmas Star” or “Star of Bethlehem” as it has been called. Two planets haven't appeared this relatively close together from Earth's vantage point since the Middle Ages. Patrick Hartigan, astronomer at Rice University told Forbes “You'd have to go all the way back to before dawn on March 4, 1226, to see a closer alignment between these objects visible in the night sky.” Stargazers in the northern hemisphere should turn their heads and telescopes to the southwest portion of the sky about 45 minutes after sunset to see the planets align December 21. However, reportedly sightings can be seen throughout that entire week. What a Christmas blessing to see the Bethlehem Star reminding us of that first Christmas night in Bethlehem when God came down to earth in a tiny babe named Jesus. What a wonderful reminder that God is with us and has always been and will always be with you.

Tentatively we plan to do Saguache UMC's Christmas Eve candle lighting service virtually and in person with protocols in place December 24th at 5 pm followed by Center UMC's service virtually and in person with protocols in place at 7 pm. Please pray that our numbers stay low and that we are able to do this safely.

Last year we started Adopt a Veteran for special gifts for our Homelake Veterans. This year we will have to do it a little differently. We are continuing our tradition of adopting a veteran from Homelake, and we invite you to participate with us! As with anything this year, there is a COVID twist. We have one hundred 10”X8.45” brown gifts bags that we would like to be filled with items that are basic necessities but might be hard for them to get good quality of during these times. Items to include in the bag: *(All items must be non-fragrant and non-gender specific)*: shampoo, deodorant, lotion, chapstick or lip balm, tissues, toothbrush, toothpaste, bar of soap and a Christmas card. You may choose to pick up the brown bags or to use one grocery bag per veteran that we can put into our brown bags for delivery. Your completed bags can be dropped off at Center United Methodist Church no later than December 18, 2020. I have 60 Adopt a Veteran bags spoken for and would like to have as many people get involved as possible. I would like to thank Vickie Miller and Mary Morfitt for participating in this project. This is a great way to thank our veterans who have been isolated from family and friends and church for the last 8 months. Please contact Hannah at the church through phone message or email, or text Pastor Debbie. This is open to folks from the community and other churches to join.

As part of reaching our Saguache community we now have a Facebook page Saguache United Methodist Church <https://www.facebook.com/Saguache-United-Methodist-Church-100823578454283>, so be sure to like us and pass our link to others who might be interested in our faith community. We also have a new mailing address which is P. O. Box 184, Saguache, CO 81149.

We have started our Advent Study. December 9th at 6:30pm via our Zoom link, we will continue our Adam Hamilton's Advent Study *Incarnation*. Please let the church office know if you wish to participate, so we can get you the resources for each week's study.

Remember that access to any worship is posted on our www.umcofcenter.com website, so feel free to go back and watch what you may have missed and forward it to your friends. The Story behind the Songs is on Facebook Live

every Wednesday at 1 pm. The bishop's Advent devotion is on Saturday evening on the conference Facebook page at 5 pm and I have posted a link on our Facebook page. Advent devotions on our Facebook page are posted Monday – Friday focusing on our Advent readings which began November 29, 2020. These are meant to develop our acts of piety through prayer, reading scripture, and daily devotions. On Wednesday Adam Hamilton's Advent Study *Incarnation* began December 2nd and is open to anyone who wishes to join using our Zoom platform. Please let Hannah or me know so we can get you the book for the study. Remember the Zoom platform can be accessed by a telephone; you don't have to have internet or a computer to participate; you just dial the number. When participating in any of the virtual services or bible studies, we will be using our Zoom platform which allows us to participate via phone or computer. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8678651613?pwd=VlVDejBRVBJT0tYnXVtUG42QTFNdz09/> is the link that can be clicked on or pasted in your browser. It should take you to our Zoom platform. If you have the Zoom app, you can go to the app on your phone or your computer and type in Meeting ID: 867 865 1613 and enter the password: 2618860. If you wish to use your phone (cell or landline) without internet call +1 (346) 248-7799 US (Houston) or +1 (669) 900-6833 US (San Jose). Enter the Meeting ID: 867 865 1613 and then the Password: 2618860. You can call me at (504) 261-8860 if you need assistance.

We are continuing a special call for donations toward Beaver Creek Youth Camp that is in dire need, especially since camp use is down and fundraisers weren't able to occur due to COVID. Please join us in helping to keep this worthwhile mission alive.

Thank you for your generosity especially during this difficult time. We have a new mailing address for Saguache United Methodist, so Saguache folks can send their contribution in check form to Saguache UMC, P.O. Box 184, Saguache, CO 81149. Please write the check to Saguache UMC. Bill will now be able to deposit those donations into First Southwest bank in Saguache into the Saguache's church account. We deeply appreciate Bill and Jeannie with their financial leadership. We continue to be blessed by the generosity of you who continue to support our church through your tithes and offerings. I would also like to encourage you to consider giving above and beyond for the 3% initiative for global giving especially during this time of COVID-19. The worldwide service fund, African University, the ministerial educational fund, and so many other funds need our help. If you wish to give, you can mark your checks for Saguache for 3% giving and mail it to P. O. Box 184, Saguache, CO 81149 where they will be deposited in Saguache UMC's account.

Our Cooking for Our Neighbors has been a blessing. Thank you to our good cooks and volunteers Betty Felmler, Kitty Bigley-Entz, Janet Myers, and Linda Warsh. Janet's turkey casserole was a big hit along with Kitty's salad, Betty's rolls, and Linda's brownies. We welcome anyone who wishes to join our little group. We know it is a lot of work which is much lighter as we share it together. It is not meant to be a burden but a blessing for everyone involved. It is such a delight to share the love of Christ in this unique way. I'm blessed to pastor such incredibly generous and compassionate folks. If you know of someone who should be on our list for meals, please let us know. If you wish to be removed, please let us know. It is truly an out pouring of God's love.

Please feel free to reach out to me to ask how to share in this unique time, especially with prayer requests and concerns. Our list continues to grow, so I hope you will join us in praying daily for our church, community, and nation. I am available via phone or text at 504-261-8860. You can always reach me via email dupton@iliff.edu or message me via our Center United Methodist Church Facebook page. Stay safe and remember we are all essential people in the family of God.

Peace and grace for the journey, *Rev. Debra Upton*