

Valparaiso First United Methodist Church December 4, 2024

This Sunday



Sunday, December 8, 2024 Second Sunday of Advent

SERMON: *The Music of Christmas: Silent Night*

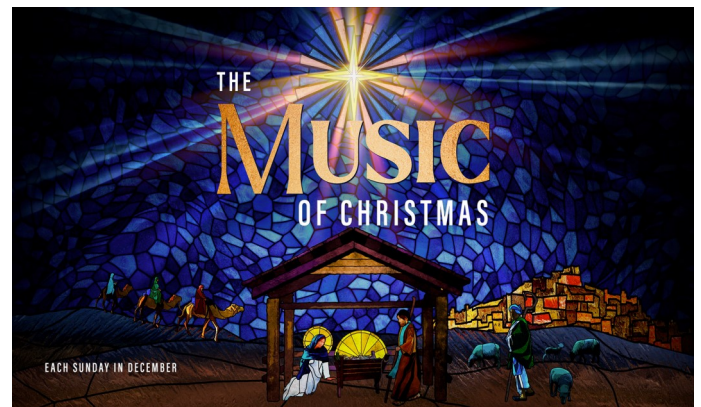
PREACHING: Pastor Cathy Allison

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 46:1-11 and Luke 2:8-14

Are you feeling anxious, overwhelmed, tired, and weary? The world can be a chaotic place. If we are not careful, we can lose our way, we can lose our focus. Our focus should be on Jesus. After all, Jesus is the reason for this season. Jesus invites us to come into His Presence. Jesus invites us to "Be Still!" Let's join together to reenergize and renew our spirits. Let's make Jesus our priority!

Please monitor your email for the links for on-line worship Sunday morning, around 8:00 a.m. Full recording of the **9:15 a.m. worship service** will be available by 1 p.m. on our Vimeo page:

www.vimeo.com/Valpofumc.



ATTENDANCE FOR

DECEMBER 1, 2024

In-Person: 190

On-Line: 593*

783

*Live Sunday morning (during worship) 48

Sunday "On-Demand" 545



Take a moment to chuckle...

It was coming up to Christmas and Sammy asked his mum if he could have a new bike. So, she told him that the best idea would be to write to Santa Claus. But Sam, having just played a vital role in the school nativity play, said he would prefer to write to the baby Jesus. So his mum told him that would be fine. Sam went to his room and wrote 'Dear Jesus, I have been a very good boy and would like to have a bike for Christmas.' But he wasn't very happy when he read it over. So he decided to try again and this time he wrote 'Dear Jesus, I'm a good boy most of the time and would like a bike for Christmas.' He read it back and wasn't happy with that one either. He tried a third version. 'Dear Jesus, I could be a good boy if I tried hard and especially if I had a new bike.' He read that one too, but he still wasn't satisfied. So, he decided to go out for a walk while he thought about a better approach. After a short time he passed a house with a small statue of the Virgin Mary in the front garden. He crept in, stuffed the statue under his coat, hurried home and hid it under the bed. Then he wrote this letter. 'Dear Jesus, If you want to see your mother again, you'd better send me a new bike.'

SAVE THE DATE:

- December 15: Lessons and Carols Christmas Celebration at **4 p.m.** in the Sanctuary
- December 17: **Office closes** at 11:00am for staff Christmas celebration
- December 19: Blue Christmas Service 6:30 p.m.
- December 24: Christmas Eve- Services at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.

ENEWS SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK

PSALM 46:10

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

**10 'Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.'**

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

On Sunday, November 17th, we welcomed new members to Valparaiso First United Methodist Church.



Brian Oakwood



Paul and Janet Chilcote



Jason and Erin Leto



Jan Lute

welcome!



WARM A HOME is back for the month of December. The tree with the Warm a Home tags and envelopes will be up and tags will be on the tree the 2nd week in December. Warm a Home is a project started by First Contact many years ago to help those in Porter county who have difficulty paying their utility bills. Those services continue to increase in price and for some it is a real burden. If you want to help, just take a tag and donate what you can and mail it to First Contact. The envelope is already addressed, it just needs a stamp, or bring it to the church office and we will see it gets to First Contact. Thank you for your generosity.

POINSETTIAS AND CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS OFFERING:

Order your poinsettias or make a donation to the Children's Christmas Offering* this year, in memory or honor of a loved one or friend. Forms are located in the entrance kiosks. Look for the bright red paper!

Deadline is Sunday, December 8. Return completed forms and money to Kate in the office, or place in an envelope and drop in the offering plate. A special bulletin will be available starting Christmas Eve listing donors and their honorees or memoriams.

**Children's Christmas Offering will help our Children's Ministry, pay off outstanding Valpo school lunch accounts, and support the work of the Bashor Children's Home in Goshen.*



Blue Christmas Service

Thursday, December 19 at 6:30p.m.

Are you feeling overwhelmed, anxious, hurt? Are you in mourning, grieving the loss of a loved one? Are sadness and/or depression a part of your days? You are not alone. I invite you to take time to take care of yourself. You owe it to yourself to take a break from the hustle and bustle of this season. We aren't able to help others if we don't take care of ourselves. There is no better way to take care of yourself than to take a time out with God.

Let this be a gift to you. This will be a time of quiet, a time of reflection, and a time to be still in God's Presence. This worship service will be filled with music, scripture, personal reflection, and prayer. Nothing is expected of you. Take this time for yourself. Give yourself permission to let go and let God take care of you.

Live Into Hope

**A Musical Celebration
for
Advent and Christmas**

Narration Sonnets By
Matthew B. Byerly

Music Selections Curated by
Dr. Christopher S. Ebert

*Featuring the Music Ministries &
Pastoral Staff of First United
Methodist Church Valparaiso*

Sunday, December 15, 2024

4 PM

First United Methodist Church Valparaiso

103 Franklin St, Valparaiso, IN 46383





Blessed to Be a Volunteer!

Care Team Ministry

CANCELLED FOR DECEMBER

Next Meeting Monday, January 6,
2025 at 1p.m.

Advent Study

Sundays at 10:30 am - December 1, 8, 15, and 22

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

A Beginner's Guide to Advent

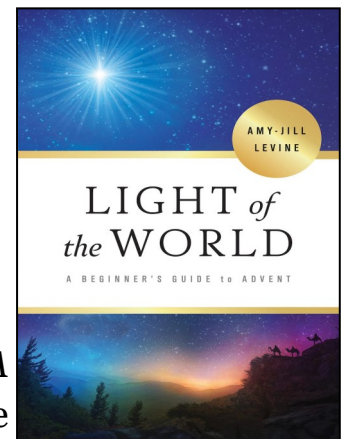
How long does the class last? 4 weeks

Where will it meet? Tower Chapel

Is there a book involved? Yes, it's called *Light of The World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent*. It's written by Amy-Jill Levine. We will have copies available for purchase for \$10.

Who's leading this class? Pastor Jared Kendall and Pastor Cathy Allison will be leading the class.

In *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent*, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the story of the birth of Jesus. Join her as she traces the Christmas narrative through the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit from the Magi. These stories open conversations around connections of the Gospel stories to the Old Testament, the role of women in first-century Jewish culture, the importance of Mary's visitation and the revolutionary implications of Mary's Magnificat, the census and the stable, and the star of Bethlehem and the flight to Egypt. The book provides a rich and challenging learning experience for small groups and individual readers alike. Sign up today to be part of this excellent Advent study!



YOUTH NEWS



During Youth Sunday School (10:30-11:30)

-Sunday, December 8th We will be reading the last chapter of The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.

-Sunday, December 15th *information change* We will be watching the movie The Greatest Christmas Pageant Ever during Sunday School. Sunday School will run from 10:30-12:30 on this date.



FOOD PANTRY REPORT



During November 179 families were served which provided food for 508 people. After 72 families signed up for Thanksgiving dinner menu meals it was a surprise that only 50 families came to pick up the items. Forty turkeys were picked up by Mickey Koehler from Porter Regional Hospital.

It was awesome that more turkeys were offered but pantry freezer space was limited. A variety of pies received from Strack's on Calumet were offered for dessert. Holiday bags from Strack's on Calumet and Hwy. 30 along with more from Town & Country have been a great help in helping to fill the near-empty pantry shelves. Christmas dinner items will be offered with a choice of a ham or a turkey. A number of holiday monetary donations will cover the cost of the hams. The families picking up the holiday meal items are appreciative of these special offerings and it is convenient that they can be picked up on the same day as when they come for their regular food items. Of course, basic foods are needed as each family is eligible to be served twice a month. Donations of the traditional 'basic' items are always needed and appreciated. Cereals, tuna in water, peanut butter, 1# pkgs. of rice, spaghetti sauce, canned fruit, pork 'n' beans and mixed veggies are examples of 'basic items.' Kleenex, paper towels, laundry and dish detergents along with cleaning or personal health supplies are also appreciated. And as mentioned each month - any kind of pantry 'help' is greatly appreciated by clients and volunteers.

Nan and Sharon

MISSIONS



December Mission of the Month **ZOE EMPOWERS**

Week 2: HOW IT WORKS



1) Supportive Community: Zoe staff (indigenous to each country) work with local leaders to identify the most vulnerable children living in extreme poverty with no adult able to care for them. These isolated youth (15-19 yrs.) attend a meeting where they are told of God's love for them, share their stories, and meet others who share their struggles. They are placed in empowerment groups of 25-30 families, whose oldest members meet weekly to plan individual and mutual help activities. For example, they all gather

at one member's home to plant or harvest crops, or build a house.

2) Trainings and Mentors:

Zoe provides holistic local trainings on health/hygiene, child rights, modern farming methods, animal husbandry, entrepreneurship, and business management/finance. Small start-up grants help launch income generation, and the group chooses a local mentor to support them.



3) **Building on Successes:** As the children begin generating income or crops, they are taught to save, diversify, and invest in new businesses, involving their siblings also. They gain self-confidence and community respect and have pride in sending siblings to school and attending church in decent clothing. Once they have basic needs met, they often share and teach other vulnerable children, even adopting other orphans. Zoe groups reach out and serve the elderly and disabled in their villages, sharing the love of God they have received.

Zoe Empowers Zimbabwe Participants Paying it Forward

by Noreen Bindura, Zoe Zimbabwe Communications Facilitator



A "mother" from the Kudavana Children's Home in Mutare expresses her joy at receiving donations from Zoe Empowers groups.

To see how the Zoe program impacts a youth-headed family in Kenya, let's visit Antony in Kenya. [Click here for Antony video.](#)

Zoeempowers.org

- ◆ Rated #1 by *Impactful Ninja* for charities that help orphaned children
- ◆ Winner of the 2021 *.org Impact Award* from among over 300 non-profits
- ◆ Guidestar: Platinum Transparency rating 2023
- ◆ Charity Navigator: 4 Star, 100% Accountability and Finance rating

WEEKLY FINANCE REPORT

OFFERINGS TO THE GENERAL FUND

Weekly offerings needed **\$14,346**

Total received last week: \$20,003

Year to Date offerings needed **\$688,608**

Total received Year to Date: \$644,535

Donate Via Web or Text

Easily support our ministries by visiting valpofumc.org/giving and scroll down to the big green “GIVE NOW” button. Or, text “Give” to 219-946-5955. You will receive a response back with how to complete your gift. With either option, if you have given online to the church before, you can “sign in,” otherwise you can just stay on the “give now” tab without having to sign into our system.



ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP

Thank you to everyone who has returned their 2025 Pledge Card. We will be reporting the results in the coming weeks, but for those that have not returned a Pledge Card, there are some on the usher’s stand or in the kiosks around the church. There is also a link in e-news and on the giving page of our [website](#). These pledges will help our Finance Committee develop a working budget for next year. Please know a pledge is an estimate and you will not be tied down to this if you are having trouble meeting your pledge. You can easily adjust it with Kate in the church office, if your situation changes throughout the year. Thank you for your continued commitment to Valpo FUMC and its mission.

End of Year Contributions

Year-end contributions must be put **in the offering plate by Sunday, December 29, 2024 or postmarked in the mail by December 31, 2024**. The office is closed after Noon on Dec. 24, for the remainder of the year, so please plan ahead so that we ensure that your contributions designated for this year will be posted in 2024 for tax purposes. We plan to have 2024 Contribution Statements in the mail by mid-January 2025.

2025 Room Reservations

If you or your group, class, ministry, or committee routinely use(s) a room for meetings, rehearsals, “get-togethers,” etc., please reserve your space now for 2025. Or, let us know if your group no longer requires use of the facility. In an effort to have an accurate calendar from which to begin 2025, and because this affects the unlocking and locking of the church, we appreciate your understanding and responding before the end of 2024. Please either email Kate at kshifflett@valpofumc.org or call her at the church (465-1661).

2025 Weekly Offering Envelopes

Offering booklet numbers are being reassigned for next year. Stay tuned for when they will be ready for pick up in Fellowship Hall. If you have not received them before and would like to, or if you no longer want to receive them, please either email Kate at kshifflett@valpofumc.org or call her at the church (465-1661).

COMMUNITY EVENTS

If you know of any community events that you think our readership would be interested in, email the information to Dr. Christopher Ebert at communications@valpofumc.org. or choirs@valpofumc.org

SUPPORT OUR YOUTH IN THEIR ENDEAVORS!

Several of our Youth here at ValpoFUMC are doing exciting things in the community. You have a chance to see them in action.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSICAL:

The Little Mermaid

December 6th and 7th at 7:00 p.m.



VALPARAISO HIGH SCHOOL:



This Is Our Story Concert at VHS

December 9th and 10th at 7:00 p.m.

Christmas at Valpo University~ A Vespers Concert

How Great Our Joy!

Friday, December 6, 7:30 p.m. and
Saturday, December 7, 5:00 p.m.

Chapel of the Resurrection

To purchase individual tickets, [shop online](#) or
purchase in person at the Center for the Arts.

The Saturday evening performance will be streamed at [youtube.com/
ValpoArts](https://youtube.com/ValpoArts)



DEADLINES FOR ENEWS AND SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you have an article or announcement for the eNews or Sunday morning screens, please be aware that the information must be received by the following date/time:

- ◆ **ENEWS AND SUNDAY MORNING SCREEN ANNOUNCEMENT** deadline is Tuesday by 12 noon. Please submit the “who, what, when, where” details to Dr. Ebert at choirs@valpofumc.org or communications@valpofumc.org. **LIMITATIONS AND APPROVAL DOES APPLY.**
- ◆ For **SUNDAY MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS (from the pulpit)**, they must be submitted with all pertinent information no later than Wednesday by 12 noon to Lani at lfisher@valpofumc.org. **SUBJECT TO APPROVAL, LIMITATIONS APPLY.**