

Eastminster Eagle

Volume 38, Issue 11

November, 2021

WHAT OUR GRANDMOTHERS TAUGHT US SERMON SERIES FOR ADVENT 2021

True story! At the end of 2019 I decided I was going to be more organized than I had ever been while pastoring at Eastminster. So, on December 27, 2019, I began writing liturgies for 2020. Seriously! To put myself further along the road, I decided I would work backward since the liturgical fall season is so packed. I have always wanted to do a sermon series about women of the Bible. And, short as it may be, the Advent season for 2020 seemed like a good place to start.



I began my searching with Matthew's genealogy and gathered information on several of the women listed and wrote liturgies that would complement the season, the women and most certainly the reason for the season...the birth of our Lord. By January 1, 2020, I was DONE!

Fast forward to March of 2020. And you know the rest of the story! By the time we arrived at Advent, 2020, I settled for using the lectionary texts because, in all honesty, it was easier, and I was tired—as we all were.

Fast forward to August of 2021. Fred emailed me one day asking about plans for Advent 2021, wondering if I might return to my original idea about women in the Bible. My answer was an excited yes. And then, as only the Holy Spirit can excite, I discovered the 2021 women's Bible study was titled: *What Our Grandmothers Taught Us!* There, between the pages of this booklet were the stories of women in the Bible! To say I had chills up and down my spine is an understatement. Some might choose to think this a coincidence; I choose to believe the Spirit was giving a blessing upon the holy work of the season.

So, I invite you this Advent season to walk alongside those grandmothers of our faith and see what we can continue to learn from them, and how we can live our lives in such a way that we, in turn, pass the story of faith on for generations to come.

On the First Sunday of Advent, November 28, we will be looking at the life of Tamar as chronicled in Genesis 38.

We will explore the life of Rahab on December 5, the Second Sunday of Advent.

Continued on Page 2

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Both of these women, like many in scripture, are unlikely characters, at least in our minds, to be part of the lineage of Jesus. Yet, we discover once again, God has purposed all our lives for good.

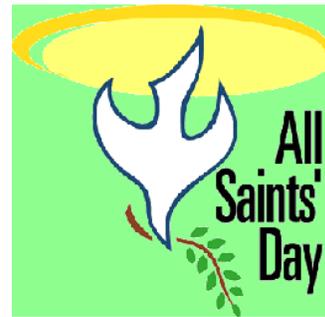
Finally, on the Third Sunday of Advent, December 12, we will take a long walk with Ruth, a gentle grandmother figure for us all. I invite you to come with open minds and hearts as we explore the mysterious and marvelous ways God works in all our lives.

Then, on December 19, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we look forward to the beautiful words and music of the season as we worship and celebrate through the Lessons and Carols.



ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7, 2021

All Saints' Sunday offers a time when we can remember all those who are part of the "communion of saints" we confess whenever we recite the Apostles' Creed.



We will hear the names of our loved ones who have died since November of last year and have become part of our cloud of witnesses.

We give thanksgiving to God for their lives, their stories, and their memories which have taught and will keep teaching us about how God provides for us through the generosity and sacrifice of those who have come before us. The stories of these saints encourage us to be all God has created us to be. This year we remember and give thanksgiving for the lives of Jenelle Symns, Peggy Slaton, Barbara Wyatt and Lewis Thiebaud.

You are invited to read the article titled, *The Longest Night Service*, as part of our continuing thanksgiving for the lives of our loved ones who died prior to last year's All Saints' Service. Their names were read during our 2020 All Saints' Service, but because of the pandemic, we were not able to be gathered for their memorial service. The Longest Night Service will offer us the opportunity to remember and give thanks.



Of the many hymns I sang and heard growing up in our family's East Texas Version of Southern Baptist, *Blest Be the Tie That Binds* found in our *Glory To God*

hymnal #306, still touches me when we sing it. It has so many meanings for each who sing it. In my growing up it was sung at the end of communion services, and other times as the congregation went back into the world from worship and even at some funerals.

It was written by John Fawcett (1739-1817) a clergyman in the English dissenting Baptist movement. Soon after Rev. Fawcett was ordained, he was asked to try to start a parish in Wainsgate which has been described by the hymnologist Albert Bailey as "a straggling group of houses on the top of a barren hill." Wainsgate was probably typical for most rural pastors in the 18th century. Fawcett, was orphaned at age 12 and was "bound out" a tailor in Bradford where he worked long hours as there were no child labor laws. During this time, he learned to read and eventually mastered *Pilgrim's Progress*, the devotional classic by John Bunyan.

Fawcett attended a revival along with 20,000 other people in an open field. They came to hear the powerful preaching of the famous evangelist George Whitefield. After the service John somehow managed to get to talk with Whitefield and told the evangelist he wanted to preach and according to tradition, Whitefield gave Fawcett his blessing. As soon as he finished his ordination, he was asked to go to Wainsgate.

Mr. Bailey describes the Wainsgate congregation this way: "The people were all farmers and shepherds, poor as Job's turkey; an uncouth lot whose speech one could hardly understand, most were unable to read or write; many were non-believers, and the town was cursed with vice, ignorance, and wild tempers. The main stream churches had never ever tried to reach them; only the humble Baptists had sent an itinerant preacher there and he had made a good beginning."

At first there was no salary for the pastor, but people brought donations of wool and potatoes to help. Fawcett went house to house engaging families and the congregation grew. The modest meeting house had to be expanded. His family also grew, and the congregation began to pay a modest salary and continue supplementing with their donations from their livestock and farms.

A prestigious parish with more financial resources in London, Carter's Lane Baptist Church, extended a call to Rev. Fawcett. Here hymnologist Dr. Harold Hawn says, "it is at this point it becomes difficult to separate fact from apocryphal imagination." As the family Fawcett made ready to leave, selling some larger pieces of furniture and older books, the parishioners came to say good-bye. They were despondent and in tears. Mary Fawcett in tears is quoted as saying, "I can't stand it John! I know not how to go." John responded, "Lord help me Mary, nor can I stand it!" They decided to stay and did so for 54 years.

Blest be the Tie That Binds was not written for this occasion. It was the custom in those days for the Pastor to write hymns to be spoken as poetry or sung after their sermons. But Fawcett sometime later wrote it and probably had the leaving event in mind.

In my lifetime it was sung many tearful times. Today when we sing it I am reminded of our church family, the Christian love, fellowship of kindred minds, and compassion that is so strong in this congregation and part of why the family Watkins have been here going on 41 years now.

*Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.*

It Takes a Village . . . A CHRISTMAS VILLAGE

Eastminster's annual Christmas Village is up and running, and this year promises a return to the excited smiles of families that we so missed last year. As we did last year, we're partnering with Mesquite First Presbyterian Church as well as other churches in the Waxahachie area.

Once again, we are going to serve families in the PCHAS Single Parent Program, which this year is helping 17 families in their care. This includes 31 children who'll be blessed by our Village.

Eighteen Boys:

One year (4)
2 years
3 years
4 years
5 years (2)
6 years
7 years
8 years
9 years
12 years (2)
14 years
15 years
17 years

Thirteen Girls:

6 months
1 year (2)
2 years
4 years
5 years (2)
8 years
10 years
11 years
12 years
16 years
17 years

Instead of bringing the families to our building this year, we're going to take the Village to PCHAS. On December 4, we'll caravan out to the PCHAS Waxahachie campus for Christmas fun with the children while their parents "shop" for gifts of toys and books. (The Wilkinson center has once again provided a generous supply of toys.) We'll also be providing families with groceries.

HERE'S HOW EASTMINSTER CAN MAKE THIS HAPPEN:

Are you a "**BOOK PERSON?**" If you love shopping for books but feel guilty because

some 7-year-old might catch you reading *Ramona the Pest* in one of those little chairs in the bookstore, this is the arena for you. Grab Charlotte Turner (by the collar or by email) and tell her you want to shop for books.



Are you a supremely organized "SET-UP PERSON?"

If your dinner table routinely looks like Martha Stewart would be jealous, or if you love arranging things for beautiful presentation, then your skills are really needed here. Tell Charlotte Turner (in person or by email) that you want to be involved in making our different "shopping areas" look beautiful and inviting.

Are you "THE COOKIE LADY/GENT?"

If baking tasty treats is your thing, let us know that you're willing to supply a few batches for this party. (Sugar and toddlers – nothing could go wrong there!)



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The subversive table

Do you HAVE A TRUCK OR LARGE VEHICLE?

Our Village gifts will need to be transported to PCHAS on December 3 so that the “supremely organized set up person” can work his/her magic.

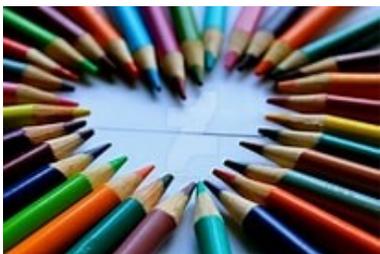
Are you the “HOST WITH THE MOST?”

If you love Christmas parties and all the laughter and love that go with them, come join us on December 4 to share this special time of joy with the families.

Finally, can you GIVE GENEROUSLY ONCE AGAIN?

Our congregation has always been known for its generosity and open hearts. Spreading Christian love and fellowship is needed today, possibly more than ever before. This year this is truly a “Christmas Village,” combining the time, talents, and monies of congregations with and beyond ours. Every dollar you give will be spent prayerfully.

The contact person for the Village is Charlotte Turner. The best way to reach her is through email: cturner1409@gmail.com, or contact the Church office.



“The Lord’s Supper [is] a profoundly subversive political event in the lives of the participants,” writes Richard Beck in *Unclean*. “The sacrament brings real people — divided in the larger world — into a sweaty, intimate, flesh-and-blood embrace where ‘there shall be no difference between them and the rest.’” Beck is quoting Walt Whitman, for whom “them” refers to “the wicked and the righteous.”

In our day, I think of political conservatives and liberals who receive equally the grace of God through Christ’s body and blood. I think of the man in a church I pastored, who took pride in stirring up controversy. I didn’t like him. But at the Lord’s table, though “divided in the larger world,” we shared a sacrament with no difference between us.

I think of my former parish near an Air Force base. Many members were military personnel and surely knew one another’s rank. But in church — at the conference table, the dinner table and especially the communion table — no difference existed between a colonel and a captain, a commissioned officer and an NCO. It was a beautiful example of God’s kingdom subverting the world’s tendency to divide.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

*The Longest Night: A Service of Light
Amid Darkness*

*Wednesday, December 19th, 2021 from
4:00-5:00 p.m.*

Eastminster's Sanctuary

The Christmas season is often marked by expressions of joy, excitement, and happiness. It's a time for family to gather and for churches to worship by pointing to the hope that is found in the coming of the Christ child. However, this time of joy and expectation can often overshadow the pain, sorrow, and hurt many people experience during this season.

The Longest Night Service, which falls on or near the Winter Solstice, provides an opportunity to experience a meditative worship service that makes

space and time for sharing our hurting places with God, preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ, sharing the Lord's Supper gathered as the family of God, and remembering our loved ones who are no longer with us, whether that be because of death, broken relationships, or distance. The service is also a reminder that we are not alone in our fears, our isolations, nor our despairs. Together we remember the promise of Emmanuel, God with us, always.



The Longest Night Service does not replace our All-Saints' Service on November 7, when we remember and give thanksgiving to God for our loved ones who have entered the Church Triumphant in the past year; but instead, offers that extra hope and encouragement when grief often sneaks up on us. Also, the Service is not offered just for those whose grief is fresh. As we all know, grief comes with no rules and no timeline. This Service offers a time for all persons to communicate with God the sorrow of the heart openly and honestly.

Certainly 2020, and even into 2021, the ways in which we celebrate the life of our loved ones in their death were affected by the pandemic. For many families and friends, gathering in person for a Service to the Witness of Resurrection was not an option. As brothers and sisters in Christ, scripture encourages us to laugh together, but also to weep together. We have all, in some way or another, grieved this last year plus, if for no other reason than not being able to grieve together and find hope in the promise of everlasting life. This Longest Night Service offers both a time to grieve and a time to give thanksgiving to God.

We will gather in the sanctuary for a time of Scripture reading, prayer, and Holy Communion. Following the Service, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for refreshments and the opportunity to share stories, particularly about our loved ones whose death during the pandemic altered some of the ways we give thanksgiving to God, to whom we belong in both life and death.

For dreams halted, for jobs lost, for relationships strained, for illnesses and injuries, for decency and compassion that was lost amid division, and so many other griefs, you are invited to hear the faithful Word of God, to find hope in the eternal life given to us through Jesus, and to rest in the comfort of the Holy Spirit with us always. We will also remember with thanksgiving these beloved saints, members of Eastminster Presbyterian Church, and now the Church Triumphant: Pat Beck, Jack Lucas, Estelle Scheibel, Will Nixon, Alice Brooks, Jenelle Symns, Peggy Slaton, Barbara Wyatt, and Lewis Thiebaud.

If you have friends or family members, not listed on Eastminster's membership rolls, whose death in 2020 or 2021 was not celebrated with a gathered community of faith, I invite you to share those names with me and we will give thanksgiving to God for the gift of their lives, also.

For the promised hope that nothing in life or death will ever be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ, we say, "Amen."

Pastor Sherry

Paradoxes of Christian virtues

In *Reaching for the Invisible God*, Philip Yancey says each virtue in 1 Corinthians 13:13 “enfolds a paradox.” Faith “will always mean believing in what cannot be proven, committing to that of which we can never be sure.” Hope isn’t “the fuel that keeps a person going” but what “emerges from the struggle, a byproduct of faithfulness.” And love — “the greatest” virtue — is very counterintuitive. “Love involves caring about people most of us would prefer not to care about,” writes Yancey. “By nature we keep records, right wrongs, and demand our rights; love does not.”

A blessing or a curse?

Holocaust survivor and devout Christian Corrie ten Boom recounts how her sister Betsie thanked God for the fleas infesting their packed barracks. When Corrie resisted the idea, Betsie pointed out that 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says to “give thanks in all circumstances.”

Still, Corrie wasn’t convinced — until the sisters realized the infestation kept the guards away, giving prisoners in those quarters freedom to worship and pray. The biting pests, which seemed like added misery, became a blessing.

Anger and bitterness sometimes cloud our vision, causing us to forget to thank God in all situations, though not necessarily for them. Other times we don’t wait long enough for blessings to be revealed. But faith is like waiting through a storm, knowing a rainbow is coming eventually. Meanwhile, the Lord holds an umbrella for us, and the closer with him we walk, the less wet we’ll get.

—Julie Lee

The journey begins at Advent

When Advent begins on November 28 this year, so does a new church year for liturgical congregations. The church seasons, which correspond to key events in Jesus’ life, begin with the four-week Advent period of preparation for our coming Savior at Christmas. After the 12-day season of Christmas is Epiphany, which begins January 6 and continues through Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. That period of preparation culminates in Holy Week, and then Easter marks the pinnacle of every church year. Forty days after the Resurrection we celebrate Ascension, and 10 days after that, the Pentecost season begins; it lasts until Advent, when the cycle begins again.



“Like a great waterwheel,” writes Joan Chittister, “the liturgical year goes on relentlessly irrigating our souls, softening the ground of our hearts, nourishing the soil of our lives until the seed of the Word of God itself begins to grow in us, comes to fruit in us, ripens in us the spiritual journey of a lifetime.”

A gratitude game

Years ago, ads for a toy-store chain featured an animated kangaroo jumping on a frown to turn it upside down. That reminds me of family life, which can feel like a nonstop attempt to keep everyone happy. Busy schedules, grumpy kids and tired parents can be a bad combination.

When our family needs to turn frowns upside down, we play the thankful game. The rules are simple: We take turns sharing one thing we’re thankful for. Everyone plays. No one can pass. No repeats are allowed. Our kids, now teens, still chime in.

As we share gratitude for football, Grandma, hugs, warm brownies, coffee and more, kids tend to stop bickering, and adults get a mental reset. Try playing — and bring on lots of smiles! —Janna Firestone





Naaman, the commander of the Aramean army, had leprosy. Who told his wife about a prophet in Samaria who might be able to cure Naaman? And who was that prophet?

- A. the king of Aram; Elijah
- B. Naaman's wife's sister; Isaiah
- C. an Israelite servant girl; Elisha
- D. a visiting emissary from Israel; Jeremiah

Answer: C (See 2 Kings 5:2-3, 8-10)

Knock Knock!

Knock knock. Who's there? Arthur.
Arthur who? Arthur any leftovers?

Why was the Thanksgiving soup so expensive?
It had 24 carrots.

If you use boxed mashed potatoes ...
... Great-Grandma will turn over in her gravy.

My family said, "No more Thanksgiving jokes." ...
... but I said I couldn't just quit cold turkey.

Here, take the whole thing ...
we have to catch up on
communion after being
shut down for so long.



Cris

Scripture Readings for November

1 Pss. 5; 145	11 Pss. 36; 147:12-20	22 Pss. 62; 145
2 Pss. 42; 146	12 Pss. 130; 148	23 Pss. 12; 146
3 Pss. 89:1-18; 147:1-11	13 Pss. 56; 149	24 Pss. 96; 147:1-11
4 Pss. 97; 147:12-20	14 Pss. 67; 150	25 Pss. 116; 147:12-20
5 Pss. 51; 148	15 Pss. 57; 145	26 Pss. 84; 148
6 Pss. 104; 149	16 Pss. 54; 146	27 Pss. 63; 149
7 Pss. 19; 150	17 Pss. 65; 147:1-11	28 Pss. 24; 150
8 Pss. 135; 145	18 Pss. 143; 147:12-20	29 Pss. 122; 145
9 Pss. 123; 146	19 Pss. 88; 148	30 Pss. 33; 146
10 Pss. 15; 147:1-11	20 Pss. 122; 149	
	21 Pss. 108; 150	

THE BLESSED HEART OF A STEWARD

Look Up! Look In! Look Out!

With joy and thanksgiving, we enter the season of intentionally celebrating the truth that we each already have within us the blessed heart of a steward. Our passage from 2 Corinthians 9: 6-8 reminds us that God loves when we decide to offer our lives and the gifts of our lives from a cheerful heart, one that does not begrudge giving nor feel pressure to share. It also reminds us that for all our needs, God provides. As we continue to discern the leading of the Spirit for Christ's church called Eastminster, we asked a few questions of some of our members. Below you will find their responses. If asked, how would you prayerfully answer?

Over the past year, plus: How have you looked up to God to help sustain and strengthen your faith? How have you looked inward for the strength of the Lord to continue living in caring relationships with God, others and self? How has your heart changed, and your faith deepened as you have embraced the fruits of the Spirit, looked outward and shared them beyond the walls of the church? And, how will the answers to all of these questions lead you to a heart-decision to give back to God cheerfully and generously?

This has definitely been a year and a half of prayers of "Help! What else can go wrong?" But that is just one part of prayer. Anne Lamott, author, says prayer consists of Help, Thanks, and Wow.



You might be wondering what in the world does a cigar box have to do with The Blessed Heart of a Steward.

Several decades ago, I asked my mother what was in that cigar box. My father smoked cigars but this box was in a cabinet in the kitchen. Mama said she put money from Daddy's pay check into that box; it was our tithe to God.

I know now that our gift in that cigar box was her giving thanks to God for the many gifts He gives us each day and for the Gift He gave us in his son, Jesus Christ. Nothing changes in our giving Thanks to God no matter what the year brings.

Sharing our gifts with the children of God can be monetary or shown by filling an empty stomach at the food pantry, or showing love by sitting and visiting with those who have spent years on the "fringe of society" or visiting with a friend on the telephone. Wows punctuate the smiles on the faces of people you share with.

Pastor Sherry calls us Children of God as we receive Communion. Gifts of God for the children of God. The gifts that keep on Giving.

Since the expansion of Covid-19 throughout the world in 2020 and 2021 and especially to the shores of the United States, I have grown in my faith as I know that the world and I do not have the solutions for what ails us. God does! I know my heart needed to be more focused on my relationship with the Lord. God provided me with a savior, His son, Jesus Christ that should always be my inspiration and guide during good times and bad. Seeing the suffering of so many in the past year has been difficult to understand or contemplate the question why? I ask that question daily "Why Lord is this happening and will you please do something about it"? As I have prayed and waited for His answer(s), I kept hearing the Holy Spirit speaking to my heart, "What is Blair going to do?" So, I thought about it. I am a believer, I am saved, I have the Holy Spirit living inside of me, I have been blessed with wealth, family and freedom. I can do something. I can be that light in the world that is dying, suffering, enslaved, addicted, alone, lost. So, through the direction of the Holy Spirit, I (our family) have stepped out in faith to give in excess of 10% of what we make in financial commitments to our church and to other Christian ministries throughout the world. I have also stepped out in faith to commit my time to the growth of my church through prayer, the work of my hands and the work of my mind and soul to Bible Study teaching and helping with the growth of our youth program.

NOVEMBER



Jim Fielding	11/2
Vicki Cook	11/3
Doris Jordan	11/7
Miatta Wilson	11/8
Kevin Karlen	11/10
Patience Uche	11/10
Lorna Almas	11/11
Cindy Garrett	11/11
Harry Karlen	11/13
Lilly Pappas	11/15
Doris Little	11/17
Charlotte Turner	11/20
Cheryl Wood	11/20
Helen Randolph	11/27
Jezzi Whitley	11/27
Stella Post	11/29
Kathy Kreger	11/30



Eastminster Session

Denise Bennett
 Betty Crabtree
 Kayla Dixon
 Blair Garrett
 Kathy Kreger
 Jim Lee
 Michele Pappas
 Helen Randolph
 Vicki Thiebaud
 Charlotte Turner



Pastor	Sherry Holloman
Director of Music	Fred P. Watkins
Organist	Melody S. Davis
Administrative Assistant	Chandra Anderson
Hostess/Housekeeper	Minerva Hernandez
Child Care Provider	Betty Crabtree

HIGHLIGHTS from the STATED SESSION MEETING

October 17, 2021

- ◆ Heard a report from the Treasurer regarding disbursements to contractors for work done on the building.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Treasurer stating that revenues are down for September/October.
- ◆ Authorized Blair Garrett, House and Property Chair, to make the \$2500 deductible payment for roof replacement.
- ◆ Heard a report from House and Property regarding finalization of construction payments from Travelers Insurance company.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Nominating Committee regarding Officer slate to be presented to the Congregation at the Congregational Meeting to be held on November 7, 2021.
- ◆ Accepted the recommendation from the Administrative Committee to present the 2022 Budget to the Congregation at the Congregational Meeting to be held on November 7, 2021.
- ◆ Heard an update on the progress of the Christmas Village project.
- ◆ Heard an update from the Long-Range Planning Committee regarding the Spiritual Discernment journey.
- ◆ Approved holding “The Longest Night” service on December 19, 2021.
- ◆ Approved amended by-laws proposals to be presented to the Congregation at the January, 2022, Congregational meeting. Proposed amendments cover Trustee instructions.
- ◆ Approved reinstating the regular offering plate passage during the Offertory.



Special dates


November

- ◆ All Saints' Day, November 1
- ◆ Daylight-Saving Time ends, November 7
- ◆ Veterans Day, November 11
- ◆ Thanksgiving Day, November 25
- ◆ First Sunday of Advent, November 28