



The Fowler Flashes

Hello everyone, I hope and pray this note finds you well.

Can you believe it? It's like December. Where has the year gone? Advent is right around the corner and Christmas is looming. Most people are right in the middle of preparing for the holidays... traveling plans, meal plans, tree shopping, dusting off Christmas decorations, cleaning the house for guests to arrive, shopping for presents, hanging lights and...and...and. Boy, I am getting exhausted just writing this.

I will have to be honest with you, as a pastor you would think that Christmas time is the most wonderful time of the year...but for me, it's not. I identify more with the idea of Blue Christmas. With the loss of my brother at an early age, my disappearing parents, the stress of having to spend too much money and the commercialization of Christmas...hello blues.

Writer Marsha Lederman writes why Blue Christmas is very real. Maybe this is your first Christmas after the death of a loved one. Maybe you're going through a divorce. Maybe you've just lost your job at CHCH or Bell Media or Suncor or in some other layoff that didn't make the news. Maybe you've been diagnosed with cancer. Or, heaven forbid, your child has. Maybe you have depression or anxiety. Maybe you had a miscarriage or are trying, desperately, to conceive a child. Maybe there's alcoholism in your family and you're worried about another Christmas Day blow-up. Or maybe you're sober and can't face one more boozy holiday party. Perhaps treacherous family dynamics have left you out in the cold this year, disinvited to Christmas dinner. Maybe a loved one is in trouble with the law or has a mental illness or has lost his way and is suffering. And so you are too. When you're facing a blue Christmas, the omnipresent holiday spirit can be hard to take.

As you can see, there are a million and one reasons why someone might feel blue during this season. I admit that I must work very hard at remembering why we are to celebrate the season...and the why for me usually begins with Jesus, cuz isn't that the real reason for the season (should be). We celebrate God's reaching down to us, breaking into history and becoming part of our very own story in the flesh. Through Jesus we get to learn about the unconditional love God has for us, and let's be honest again...that my friends is something to celebrate.

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Here are some practical ideas that might help you ease your way through this Christmas season.

- Be honest with yourself about how you are feeling
- If you can only manage one thing, go for self-care. Learn to say “no”
- Spend time alone to reflect and grieve, if necessary but don’t isolate
- Make plans in advance, shop early. Don’t buy things you can’t afford
- Don’t allow perfectionism to wear you down
- Ask for help. Get support when mourning a loved one
- Do something for someone else
- Reach out to someone in need
- Limit alcohol
- Get plenty of sleep
- Be open to new traditions
- Spend time with your loved ones
- Exercise regularly
- Do something fun to get over a recent breakup
- Avoid overeating
- Push yourself to get out and be active

There are probably many other ways you have found to get through the blues, share them with someone you know might need help. Remember there is no quick fix, and one thing will not work for everyone.

A couple of things that have been helpful to me over the years, remember your blessings (write them down), be thankful for the people who love you (tell them), go find a Blue Christmas service somewhere (Audubon UMC, Dec 19 at noon), come to church during Advent and especially Christmas Eve (always helps me), go and volunteer help those who are in need and make someone else’s Christmas a little better.

Please know that I am always available to share my blues with you (lol). Just give me a call, a text, come by the office, or buy me a cup of java someplace. It is my prayer that during this Christmas Season the Joy of knowing Jesus will fill your hearts and minds and that you are not alone in your pain. Love casts out all fears, and Luke tells us in chapter 2 verse 10. *“But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”*

Peace to all far and near...Pastor Rene’

DECEMBER 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9 - 10:15 Children & Youth Breakfast and Sunday School 9:15 am - Adult S. S. 10:30 - Worship 12:00 Coffee Hour 5:00 - Marafikki	2	3 9:00 - Tops 10:00 - Prayer Group 11:00 - Koinonia 1:00 - Koinonia Bible Study	4 12 pm - Sophia Circle 3:30- 4:26 - Advent Choir Practice 6pm Bible Study	5 12:00 UMW Meeting 12:15 Men's Lunch at Golden Corral 6:45-7:55 - Band Practice	6	7
8 9 - 10:15 Children & Youth Breakfast and Sunday School 9:15 am - Adult S. S. 10:30 - Worship 2-4 pm Charge Conf. Cluster Moran UMC 12:00 Coffee Hour 5:00 - Marafikki	9	10 9:00 - Tops 10:00 - Prayer Group 11:00 - Koinonia 1:00 - Koinonia Bible Study	11 12 pm - Sophia Circle 3:30- 4:26 - Advent Choir Practice 6 pm Bible Study 6 pm UMW Book Club @ Denny's	12 10--12 Craft Group 1-3 pm My AG group 1pm Staff Meeting 2:30 pm Worship Committee 6:45-7:55 - Band Practice	13	14
15 9 - 10:15 Children & Youth Breakfast and Sunday School 9:15 am - Adult S. S. 10:30 - Worship 5:00 - Marafikki Worship	16	17 9:00 - Tops 10:00 - Prayer Group 11:00 - Koinonia 1:00 - Koinonia Bible Study	18 12 pm - Sophia Circle 3:30- 4:26 - Advent Choir Practice 6pm Bible Study	19 12 pm Blue Christmas Service Audubon UMC 1pm Prep & Mail Flashes 6:45-7:55 - Band Practice	20	21
22 9 - 10:15 Children & Youth Breakfast and Sunday School 9:15 am - Adult S. S. 10:30 - Worship 12:00 coffee hour 5:00 - Marafikki	23 Christmas Eve Music Practice Time TBA	24 9:00 - Tops 7 pm Christmas Eve Service	25 Office Closed MERRY CHRISTMAS	26 Office Closed	27	28
29 9 - 10:15 Children & Youth Breakfast and Sunday School 9:15 am - Adult S. S. 10:30 - Worship 12:00 coffee hour 5:00 - Marafikki	30	31 9:00 - Tops 10:00 - Prayer Group 11:00 - Koinonia 1:00 - Koinonia Bible Study	1 January HAPPY NEW YEAR! Office Closed	2	3	4

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1 - Pam Doyon
- 8 - Larry Price
- 9 - Rick Lockert
- 12 - Jeni Sherman,
Sally Schafhirt
- 13 - Enya LaFrance
- 14 - Alexa Knutson
- 15 - Faye Sanford
- 18 - Carol Vrolson
- 19 - Robert Hammer
- 23 - Ron & Carol Ring,
Kergan Boone
- 24 - Sarah Briggs
- 28 - John & Bev Parrott,
John & Dotie Godley,
Christelle Mwange
- 29 - Janet Abernathy
- 30 - Mable Pangle & Nader Habashy,
Vince & Laura Velonza

Wishing our friends a "happy. . .",
a "merry. . .",
a "best wishes . . .",
and a "blessings . .
.."
for their special day.



The Christmas Brunch will be held on December 22nd following the service. The menu will be casseroles, sweet rolls or muffins, and fruit. A sign-up sheet (including slots for setting up and clean up) will be posted soon.

While on the topic of food, I am happy to report the new sign-up plan seems to be working well. However, we still need sign-ups for Dec. 24 and Dec. 29.

Advent begins Dec. 1 and, as usual, Sunday School and Youth Group will be involved in the short presentations during the lighting of the Advent candles. This year's theme is The Wonder of Christmas with each of the four Sundays featuring the wonder of a star, a name, a manger, and a promise. Each Sunday School class will be involved at least once.

We could use parents' help on Dec 15 to dress the younger children in animal costumes.

Laurie Newell

Coffee Hour Update:

December 22nd Potluck lunch!

See Sign up sheets in Corinthian Hall or if you have questions please see Laurie Newell.





The Fowler United Methodist Women will meet on **Thursday, December 5th** in Corinthian Hall at noon. Our program will be based on an article written by Harriet Jane Olson, the General Secretary of UMW. It asks the question, "What Did Mary Know?" We will sing Christmas Carols and we may have a project or two for Christmas giving. **Please bring a potluck item!**

Great news! Our United Methodist Women's UMC bazaar made a whopping \$1500.00!. This was possible to our exceptional crafters, especially Sue Robinson and Laurie Newell, who donated their work through their love of Jesus.

\$175.00 came from 35 purchased lunches, which were delicious and generously prepared by Joan Schuman and her angel helpers.

The women and children locally, nationally, and internationally will benefit, thanks to your generous help and support. Many thanks and blessings to you all.

Our upcoming meeting, Thursday, Dec. 5th, will be a potluck. Our mission program will honor Jesus' birthday. We will then assemble our gifts to the shut-ins.

See you there. Connie Lanzinger, UMW president

First Corinthians 13 for United Methodist Women

Though I attend circle meetings and make the finest plans
But have not love, there will be no growth or renewal for me.
And though I make my pledge, participate in the Reading Program,
and fill those hygiene kits, but have no awareness of the UMW's mission focus,
It is not enough!

And if I spend many hours of "being involved"
and become tense and nervous with the strain,
but have no love or understanding of community and global concerns,
It is not enough!

The United Methodist Woman is patient and kind;
Is not shocked when someone brings her their confidences,
does not gossip;
Is not easily discouraged;
Does not behave in ways that are unworthy,
but tries at all times to be a living example
of the good way of life which **He** give.
Love never fails...

Meetings will be attended and then forgotten.
Rummage sales will come and go.
Mission projects will be initiated, and then completed.
We know only a little. We can pass on only a little.

But when we have love,
Then our efforts can become creative;
And our influence will make a difference for someone... somewhere.

**And now abide these three;
Commitment, Participation, and Love
But the greatest of these is Love.**

THANK YOU NOTES



Thanks to all of you who helped celebrate my recent birthday through your cards, gifts, laughs, and attendance at my party and overall astonishment that I had lasted that long. Also, thanks to my 5 children who organized and provided the party. See you in 10 years at my 70th.
Tom Bryan

Thank you to all that brought food and assisted with the Harvest Dinner. Everything turned out wonderfully well... far beyond my expectations. I so much appreciate the love and care that you show for the people in our Church.

Blessings,
Joan Schumall



I wanted to thank you all for the lovely flowers, super yummy pie, gift basket, cards, notes, and the wonderful gift card. I was truly touched by your expressions of love and care. I will forever hold the congregation of Fowler UMC in my heart. You are what made my years at Fowler so wonderful and special.

I will miss you all but I look forward to seeing you at the UMW meetings!

Blessings to you,
Laura Velonza

Music Notes from Nathan!

*"A child is born among us, a son is given to us,
and authority will be on his shoulders.
He will be named ...
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" Isaiah ³:⁰*



Come help us to lift this expression of our faith and we sing it and play it in the midst of our Advent worship in December!

Our music ministry is looking for anyone who would like to join with our choir and or worship band to lift us a song of praise as we prepare music for the Advent season. All abilities and ages are welcome! Call Nathan for more info at #465-9920.

Rehearsal details: Wednesday, Dec. 4, 11, 18, 23, and 9
Time: 3:30-4:30pm

We look forward to welcoming new participants as we glorify Christ's birth and celebrate this gift to our world!

YOUTH GROUP NEWS



Hello Youth,

I am so excited to announce that the youth room is coming together. We spent time cleaning, washing, and scrubbing the youth room. We will reveal the project in December. October and November were very busy months! We had 9 of our youth dressed up as 'flying monkeys' for the carnival. They helped in cleaning up afterward too. We also lead the Church service on October 20th, which was beautifully done. We helped out at the Bazaar while drawing murals in the youth room and then we helped the ladies take down the Bazaar. We had a fun fellowship day at Pattersons' Roller Rink! Nineteen of our kids had a blast! A big **Thank You** to all that provided rides and support!

Looking ahead to December. We will be helping out with Advent moments. Our big service project is called "Project Teddy Bear"! Please bring a teddy bear or other stuffed animal to support. Project Teddy Bear is to help children when our police and firefighters rescue or take them out of their homes. Each child will be able to receive a Teddy Bear.

Looking ahead to 2020. We may participate in Winterfest at Twinlow. We are also looking at having an after school program. There is a lot of excitement ahead. I hope to see you there!

Blessings,
Shelley

If you are interested in more information about the Youth Group or any of the upcoming activities, please contact Shelley Barton at 509-703-3893

Fowler United Methodist Church

3928 N. Howard Street
Spokane, WA 99205
Fowlerumc@yahoo.com
509-325-3242

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3928 N. Howard St.
Spokane, WA 99205
(509) 325-3242

Fax: (509) 327-7460

Facebook: [FowlerUnited
MethodistChurch](#)
[fowlerumc@yahoo.com](#)

Pastor: Rev. Rene' Devantier

Editors: Diane Strobeck

& Su Walker

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