

The Outlook

WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
"Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors"

office:(661) 871-3030, Admin. Asst. 872-8741

e-mail: office@wesleybakersfield.org

website: wesleybakersfield.org

Facebook: [WesleyUMCBakersfield](https://www.facebook.com/WesleyUMCBakersfield)

Vol. LXV, #24

Anne Schlesinger, Pastor

December 23, 2024

10:30 a.m. Worship on Facebook and In-Person

Rev. Anne Schlesinger, preaching

Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24, 4:30 p.m.

I Corinthians 12:22-26, Luke 2:1-20

"The Stable: A Place of Care"

Christmas Eve Celebration will include Scriptures and Carols

First Sunday After Christmas, December 29, 10:30 a.m.

1 Peter 1:1-25, John 15: 1-8. "Covenant Renewal"

Baptism of our Lord, January 5, 10:30 a.m.

Isaiah 60:1-6, Matthew 2:1-12. "Persia: A Place of Return (Home)"



♫ A Note from the Pastor



The joy of Christmas is more than the happiness of one day. My prayer is that the joy of Christmas lives in our hearts for all time, no matter what the circumstances of that day. For God so loved the world—that's you and me and all our neighbors— that God gave us Jesus, Emmanuel, God-With-Us, for an eternal blessing!

As I write this, the preparations are still incomplete, but I cannot help but be filled with joy and anticipation for the worship and music. A special treat for our Christmas Eve service will be that our Doug, our music director, has invited his mother Diane and his fiancé Aiden to join our choir. They joined our rehearsal on Wednesday, and it was a pleasure to have them both. I hope you can join us for worship, and please invite your friends and family. Worship begins at 4:30 pm.

The Christmas season extends through the celebration of Epiphany on January 5. Following that, we will celebrate The Baptism of the Lord and then begin a new worship series called "Six Stone Jars" on January 19. You will hear more about that series in the next edition of The Outlook.

The equipment we ordered for our tech team has started to arrive. We are very hopeful the new equipment will enhance our online worship. This initiative is an outreach effort to invite new people to worship as well as to include our members who can no longer attend in person due to health restrictions or other reasons. Let us all make an effort in the new year to reach out to friends we no longer see each week in church and let them know how blessed we are to be in fellowship with them.

Our Disciple Bible study will be on hiatus for two weeks and will return renewed and refreshed on January 8.

Many blessings for the New Year,
Pastor Anne

Prayers

We pray for our friends and family serving in the military

We pray for healing, for ourselves and others:

- For Nancy J—she has a long road to full recovery so will need many prayers for healing and pain relief
- For Danny, Jenifer, Lea, Balthazar, Barbara
- For Brenden
- For Kim McAtee—and gratitude for her family and several faith communities coming to her aid
- For Cathy and Ashley of Laguna Community UMC with serious health issues
- Barbara's niece Susan—to find peace and healing
- Stella, Tish and family, and for the family to help with decisions and communication, especially regarding changes due to new medication
- Stella's friend Cathy—healing and pain relief
- Terry's aunt Susanne to have surgery 12/23
- Cindy L—healing following a hip replacement—due to a previous failed procedure.
- Faith seekers, especially young people trying to develop their faith understanding
- Rev. Robin Matthews-Johnson
- Linda R

We pray for other needs in our world:

- For peace, especially in Gaza, Israel, Ukraine, Russia, South Korea, Syria, Haiti. We ask you, O God, to fill the minds and hearts of the political leaders to bring about just peace.
- Laura D unintentionally hurt someone's feelings and asked for prayer that her attempt to make emends is successful
- Prayers for peace and forward thinking in the US

- May the joy of Christmas be spread
- For families and households experiencing stress & violence
- Fires in Malibu
- Tornado in Santa Cruz County
- Michael & Laura D were given positions in Laguna Community UMC and ask for God's guidance to do the work well
- Students taking final exams
- Children exploited or put in harm's way
- We pray that the government that forms in Syria brings peace and the end of oppression.

We celebrate and praise God for:

- The un-cluttering of Linda T's space was uneventful because of her work beforehand
- Toni D worked hard and got the lead in BHS's spring production—a unique accomplishment for a sophomore to get the lead
- Vanessa was gifted with a new (to her) car
- Jerry is grateful for the gift of memory, especially precious memories recalled by holiday traditions
- For the hard work of Rose, Ernestine, Marlene, Bill and Barbara setting festive tables for potluck.
- Allison's achievement finishing the work for her Master's degree
- Rain
- Restored heat in the Parsonage—thanks to Josh H.
- Bishop Sandy's and DS Mary's visit to Wesley
- Sarah Strobel, Jo Dethlefson and Mia Tomlin (Anne's granddaughter) all celebrated birthdays on December 10
- For James D's birthday on 12/13
- Linda T. was blessed by gift's from Santa and from Jill's church who "adopted" her

Deadline

The next deadline to submit articles to the newsletter, *The Outlook*, is Monday, January 6. Thank you.

Finance Campaign Ongoing

You should have now received your pledge card in the mail for supporting the ministries of Wesley UMC in 2025. Many thanks to all who have prayerfully considered their 2025 giving to Wesley. If you have not turned in your pledge card, please mail it to the church office P.O. Box 6577, Bakersfield 93386. We have received 18 pledges totaling \$86,420. Our goal is 30 pledges. Please prayerfully consider a monetary pledge. Thank you and God bless you!

Giving To Wesley

To be included in 2024 Giving Statements, contributions for the 2024 tax year needs to be in the church by December 31st or mailed to the church with a postmark of December 31st or before according to the Internal Revenue Service.

Happy January Birthday to.....

8	Bill Wilson
11	Andrew Cavazos
15	Gia Murillo
16	Allison Cavazos
28	Lizbeth Hallam

Happy Anniversary to...

3	Marvin & Beth Davisson
21	Bill & Marlene Blair