

# MUNHOLLAND

DECEMBER 2023 MUNHOLLAND METHODIST PUBLICATION

## “WITNESSING GOD’S JOY”

*Dr. Jonathan Beck, Pastor*

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## SUNDAY SERVICES

Traditional: 8:30 AM & 11:00 AM  
Sunday School: 9:30 AM (All ages)

## PASTOR

**Dr. Jonathan Beck**

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## PROGRAM STAFF

Ann Birdsong,

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## STAFF

Nora Huete

Business Manager

Darlene Brown

Communications Dir.

Charlotte Call

Secretary/Administrative

Frank Ruholl

Safe Sanctuary

MaryBeth Bonin

KDO Director

Kim Smuck

KDO Associate Director

Malcom Munster

Custodian

## MUSIC STAFF

Phil Sparks

Organist

## CONTACTING THE CHURCH

PHONE: 504.834.9910

[www.munhollandchurch.org](http://www.munhollandchurch.org)

## 'Witnessing God's Joy'



We have entered Advent with Christmas fast approaching. It is amazing that in this season of joy and peace we can often feel anxious. We become anxious about decorating and making our homes beautiful. We become anxious about getting all our work done so we can enjoy the holiday. Parties wear us out, yet we hope that our parties are a success. We worry about the big Christmas gathering, are nervous about the difficult family members and the religious and political conversations that never end well. Basically, we are afraid that nothing will turn out as we hoped.

Perhaps we aren't that different from those we read about in the Christmas story. The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah foretold the Messiah's coming. Not only the religious leaders but all the Israelites were full of anxiety as they awaited their salvation. Exactly when and where would the Messiah be born? Nothing seemed to be going right. They were full of fear under the brutal occupation of Rome. They had family squabbles about faith and politics. The mandatory festivals reminded them of God's salvation which heightened their own yearning for freedom? Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, Elizabeth, and everyone else were full of anxiety when something unimaginably good happened.

God paved the way for His son with wonderful announcements. Each one began with 'Fear Not!' Zechariah was lighting incense in the Temple when an angel appeared to him. Zechariah was stunned, amazed and fearful. That fear was quickly dispelled. "Do not be afraid, Zechariah! Your prayer has been heard."(Luke 1:13) Zechariah would receive the joy of a son. Mary was more than startled by the angel Gabriel who told her, "Do not be afraid, Mary! You have found favor with God."(Lk 1:30) She experienced unimaginable joy as she embodied life in God. Later, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream with the words, "Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."(Matthew 1:20) Joseph would experience the joy of playing a part in God's larger plan.

The story that brings us to a joyful conclusion is that of the shepherds. Though fearful at first, the angels told them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."(Luke 2:10)

Don't be filled with anxiety and fear this Christmas, rather, be a witness to God's unfolding joy in the world.

Merry Christmas!  
Jonathan

# LIVING CHRISTMAS

by Jeff Pellegrin

With Advent at hand, we enter a time of preparation and reflection on the coming of Jesus Christ, the significance of His life and ministry, and of His promised return. For Christians the world over, this is a time to celebrate our shared Hope. And in remembering that God sent His only Son to reconcile the whole world to Himself, we are called to share that Hope with others.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14 It's hard for us, having grown up with this baked into the pie, so to speak, to imagine just how groundbreaking this was and still is. The Apostle is saying that he and his cohort have seen and walked with God. Not just a good man, or a gifted rabbi, or a renowned warrior, or some otherwise famous person; God!

John provides a unique perspective on the life of Jesus, emphasizing His divinity and His role in redeeming all of creation. Likewise, when Isaiah declared "For unto us a child is born ..." he foretold the coming of the Son of God. Indeed, Jesus is our Wonderful Counselor, the Prince of Peace.

A quick glance at the headlines reveals just how desperate our world is for Wisdom and hungry humanity is for Peace. Why then are our pews practically empty, except for Christmas and Easter? It cannot be for a lack of questions. Perhaps they think there are no answers here to find. And where would they possibly get such an impression? Sadly, they got it from me, and from you, for we taught them to look elsewhere.

Friends, we must be "Christmas people" all year round, not just in December. We are called to enter into one another's suffering in a way that mirrors Christ's sacrifice for us. No one ever walked away from the church because too many people were willing to take the time to really listen and share their burdens. But countless have been lost because the opposite is all too often true.

This year, as we celebrate Christmas, let us face the fact that we are to live out our faith in Jesus in a way that requires more of us than we are comfortable giving. But take heart, for God does not require more than He has equipped us for.



## MUNHOLLAND METHODIST MEN

*Helping Men Grow in Christ, so  
Others May know Christ.*

### MEETING

December 14th 7 PM - Zoom only

### MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP

Men's Coffee Crew Study Group  
meets at Munholland on  
Wednesdays at 7:00 AM in the FH.

If you have any questions or would like more information about the Munholland Methodist Men, contact Steve Zansler, President, at [phylzans@hotmail.com](mailto:phylzans@hotmail.com).

# 'THE MESSENGER COMES WITH FIRE'

by Ronda Knox

"I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty. But who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness." Malachi 3:1-3

Malachi whose name means "My Messenger", was a minor prophet who wrote the last book of the Old Testament. The main emphasis of his book is that God has promised to send a Messenger to us. God knew it would be a long time (400 years) before the birth of His Son and desired to encourage His people not to give up hope that what God has promised, He will fulfill. While it was comforting to Israel to know God has not forgotten them, the verbiage used to describe this Messenger was hardly the cozy glow of Christmas lights and joyful music, but more of a roaring blaze. "The messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come. **But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?**"

To refine gold, heat must be applied to force the impurities to the surface, the impurities are called Dross. As the Dross or impurities rise, they are removed, and more heat is applied. This process continues and continues, with continuous heat applied and re-applied, until the gold is pure.

Matt and Josh Leroy state in their book, Protagonist, "God is a refiner's fire who draws close, bent on purifying and transforming us into priceless gold. The brilliance and blaze of this refiner's fire does not destroy us. It transforms us. When we think of this season, we often reflect on what Jesus brings. But Malachi reminds us he has also come to take away. To give his life and take away our sin. To burn away all that is not gold and cannot survive the refinement process."

Let us enjoy the baby in the manger and all the wonder surrounding His birth, but do not forget Jesus has come to change the world, which includes you. What Love! That hope alone brings us joy! Merry Christmas!

PROTAGONIST ADVENT IS HERE!!!

Discover how God has written Himself into the story of Advent!

'Protagonist'  
Wed., Nov. 29th - Dec. 20th  
6:15 - 7:30 PM RM 209  
Led by Ann Birdsong

COMING IN 2024!  
THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE  
BEGINNING 1/31/24 - 3/13/24  
6:15 - 7:30 PM ROOM 111  
LED BY TOM BERGEON  
A DEEP DIVE INTO THE PERSON &  
LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

# 'HOPE IN THE PROMISE'

by Phyllis Zansler

Words of a promise – a promise most remembered from another season and another place – not at Christmas near Bethlehem but at Easter in Galilee.

"I am with you always," the resurrected Jesus promises the remaining eleven disciples at the end of Matthew's gospel. (Matt 28:20)

This same promise resounds as the promise of Advent, for the story of Christmas rests on it. God promises the people of Israel through the words of prophets and psalmists that He is with them, though they betray God and sin and follow other gods many times...God still promises them "I am with you."

God promises Mary through the angel Gabriel, "I am with you and find favor with you, blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28)

Mary replies, "Here I am Lord, let it be to me according to your word. (Luke 1:38)

In a dream, an angel appears to Joseph, Mary's husband-to-be, and tells him to not be afraid to take Mary as his wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name of Jesus. God promises Joseph, "I am with you." He has the promise that God – Immanuel, is already with him. (Matt 1:20-23)

When Joseph awoke, he took Mary as his wife, in doing so he promises her, "I am with you." (Matt 1:24)

Promise by promise the Advent story is told. God promises, through the words of prophets; in the songs of psalmists; from the lips of angels; by a fresh tiny cry in the night.

A promise made by God, to a young virgin, by the trust of a man, through the hope of a people, in the flesh of humanity.

From the beginning to the end, Jesus Christ embodies God's promise to be the world, for you and for me: "I am with you."

Behold, the promise of Hope is given!



## Calendar

**We believe love in action  
can change the world.  
Please join us.**

**12/5/23  
General Meeting  
10:00 AM FH**

**If you have any questions,  
please contact our  
Communication Coordinator,  
Phyllis Zansler.**



**Looking for the perfect Christmas  
gift???**

**Homemade Soups (sm freezer),  
jellies (FH), and pickles (frig.)  
make wonderful presents.**

**Drop off money in the marked  
basket (FH) or see Phyllis/ Jana for  
more info..**

# Christmas at Munholland



UW Faith  
**Christmas Brunch**  
Sat., December 9, 2023  
10 AM - 12 PM  
at Munholland - Fellowship Hall  
All women are invited to join us  
Questions: Phyllis Zansler



*Family Fun Night and Caroling Under the Oak*  
Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023  
Family Fun Night 4:30 - 5:30 pm  
Games Crafts Pictures with Santa  
Caroling Under the Oak 5:30 pm  
Caroling Hot Cocoa Cookies  
SO MUCH FUN!!! INVITE A FRIEND!!!



**HANGING OF THE GREENS**  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH  
AT 11:00 AM SERVICE



MUNHOLLAND'S  
**FAMILY CHRISTMAS FEAST**  
WEDNESDAY  
DECEMBER 13TH  
5:00-6:15 PM



*Celtic Christmas Festival of Music*  
Dec. 13, 2023 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
Sanctuary  
Celebrate Christmas Music  
by Munholland's Choir



MUNHOLLAND CURSILLO  
CHRISTMAS PARTY  
Thursday, December 14th  
6:30 PM Kreutziger's home  
RSVP - Church office  
504.834.9910



DAYS:  
FRIDAY, DEC. 8TH  
SAT., DEC. 9TH

HOURS  
11 AM - 7 PM

2 HOUR WORK  
SHIFTS

To register -  
email Betsy White  
BetsySW@aol.com

REGISTER TO  
**RING**

Munholland  
Volunteers Needed!

Ring a bell...  
help change a life

**MUNHOLLAND'S  
CHRISTMAS  
BRUNCH**

SUNDAY, DEC. 17, 2023  
9:30 - 11:00 AM  
FELLOWSHIP HALL

Hosted by the Sunday School Classes



**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
*Candlelight*

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**SERVICES**

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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023**

<p><b>4:00 PM</b> <b>FAMILY</b> <b>SERVICE</b></p>	<p><b>6:00 PM</b> <b>TRADITIONAL</b> <b>W/COMMUNION</b></p>
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12/24/23 Advent Sunday - 11:00 AM Service ONLY followed by two Christmas Eve Candlelight Services



# Growing God's Kingdom One child at a time!

Nurturing spiritual growth in children to equip them with a foundation in faith that will allow them to grow personally, form a relationship with Jesus Christ, live out their faith daily and disciple others.

## Church Nursery

The nursery is available for infants & toddlers during the 8:30 AM service, Sunday School, & the 11:00 AM service. Make sure to bring a bag with all the items your child/children may need.



## Sunday School - Children grades Pre-K 4 to 5th

Join us from 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM to learn about God & His son, Jesus, through songs, games, experiments & more!

**Sunday School Lesson** - God gave us 10 Commandments to help us live a life that's sweeter not only to him, but to everyone around us. The 10 Commandments can make us, and the world around us, a sweeter place.

## Children's Church - 11 AM Service

During the first part of the worship service the children are invited down to the front to hear a short Children's Sermon. Children then leave the service to participate in Children's Church (RM 209.)

During this time children will sing worship songs, hear a Bible story, participate in various activities regarding a scripture verse, & pray. Children return back to BIG church during the last hymn.



## Children's Choir - The Acorns

At Munholland, we strive to teach our children to connect with God, grow with each other, and serve the world. Music is one of the tools we use to do just that!

Rehearsal time is Wednesday from 5:30 - 6:30 PM. We would love to have all children, ages 4-14 years old (Pre-K-8th Grade), join us.

For more information visit Munholland's website under the Ministry section look for **The Acorns.**





## **YOUTH** (GRADES 6TH - 12TH)

Sunday School  
9:30 - 10:30 AM

Collective Sundays  
5:00-7:00 PM Youth Room

Each Wednesday, I send out a weekly Newsletter with up-coming events, calendar and other information about what's going on at Munholland Youth!

If you would like to be added to Owen Trotter's, Youth Director, email list, send to [owent@munhollandchurch.org](mailto:owent@munhollandchurch.org).



# Munholland In a Week

## SUNDAY

- 8:30 AM Worship Service
- 9:30 AM Sunday School Classes
- 11:00 AM Worship Service
- 12:00 PM Prayer Meeting \* (1st and 3rd Sunday)
- 5:00 PM Youth Collective Mtg.
- 5:00 PM AA Group Officers Mtg
- 6:00 PM Sunday Night AA Group

## MONDAY

- 9:30 - 1:30 PM  
Kids Day Out (M, W, Th, Fr)

## TUESDAY

- 9:00 AM Staff Meeting
- 10:00 AM UWF General Meeting \*
- 1:30 PM Program Staff Meeting
- 2:30 PM Mt. Zion Good Samaritan (3rd Tuesday)\*^

## WEDNESDAY

- 7:00 AM Men's Coffee Crew Study Group
- 10:00 AM Women for Women Study- 'Better Together'
- 5:00 PM Midweek Meal
- 5:30 PM Children's Choir (The Acorns)
- 6:00 PM Cursillo
- 6:15 PM *Romans Part 2* (9/13 - 12/06)
- 6:15 PM *Protagonist* (11/29 - 12/20)
- 6:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal

## THURSDAY

- 10:00 AM Ladies weekly ongoing study -  
'Waiting Here for You' Advent Study
- 7:00 PM Munholland Methodist Men \* (usually on the  
second Thursday)
- 7:30 PM Al Anon
- 8:00 PM NA
- 8:00 PM AA

\*Note: Not a weekly event

^ Contact Betsy White at [betsysw@aol.com](mailto:betsysw@aol.com)

FH: FELLOWSHIP HALL

For more information... Visit our  
website... [munhollandchurch.org](http://munhollandchurch.org)

## CHURCH CALENDAR

## UPCOMING DECEMBER EVENTS

### UWF CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

10:00 AM - 12 PM FH

09

### FAMILY FUN NIGHT

4:30 - 5:30 PM

### CAROLING UNDER THE OAK

5:30 PM

### MIDWEEK CHRISTMAS DINNER

5:00-6:15 PM FH

13

### CELTIC CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

6:30 PM SANCTUARY

14

### MUNHOLLAND'S CURSILLO CHRISTMAS PARTY

6:30 PM KREUTZIGER'S HOME

17

### MUNHOLLAND'S CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

9:30 AM FH

### ADVENT SERVICE

11:00 AM ONLY

24

### CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

4:00 PM FAMILY SERVICE

6:00 PM TRADITIONAL

25

### MERRY CHRISTMAS

ANGEL TREE DEADLINE - 12/3  
ST. MARK'S DEADLINE - 12/10

Dear Munholland Family,

A heartfelt thank you to all who have pledged for 2024! What plans God has for creating a new vision to gain more disciples for Jesus Christ. Munholland is in a rebirth and we need everyone's support to make 2024 a year of growth, mission, and serving.

As we celebrate the birth of our savior, please support Munholland with a Christmas gift. We need your help in supporting the important ministries of our church. May this Christmas season bring you and your family many blessings.

Merry Christmas,

Kitty Stulb  
Finance Chair

**MOBILE TEXT GIVING**

Text "MUNHOLLAND" to 73256 to give using your mobile device. This number will never send unsolicited texts to you. To cancel further messages, text STOP.

If you need assistance with text giving, text HELP. Standard text message and data rates may apply.

**Munholland's Vital Statistics**

	November 2023			January - November 2023			
	Budget	Actual	Variance		Budget	Actual	Variance
<i>Contributions</i>	\$76,445	\$61,483	-\$14,962	<i>Contributions</i>	\$917,345	\$728,506	-\$188,839
<i>Expenses</i>	\$76,445	\$66,250	\$10,195	<i>Expenses</i>	\$917,345	\$777,765	\$139,580
<i>Net Income/Loss (Contributions)</i>	\$0	-\$4,767	-\$4,767	<i>Net Income/Loss (Contributions)</i>	\$0	-\$49,259	-\$49,259

This is as of November 28th; it includes the November 30th payroll.

# MESSENGER

MUNHOLLAND METHODIST CHURCH  
1201 METAIRIE RD METAIRIE, LA 70005

## THINK ABOUT IT

From 1558 to 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly during the 12 days of Christmas (from Christmas Day to Epiphany). During this period "The Twelve Days of Christmas" was written as a catechism song for young children. The hidden meanings of the song's gifts were intended to help the children remember the lessons of their faith and were known only to members of the church. Instead of referring to an early suitor, the "true love" refers to God Himself. The "me" is symbolic of every believer in Christ. The "partridge" is our Savior, Jesus Christ. In the song, Christ is a symbol of mother partridge, who protects her helpless nestlings from predators.

The meanings of the other symbols are:

2 turtle doves: Old and New Testaments

3 French hens: Faith, Hope, and Love

4 calling birds: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

5 gold rings: Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

6 geese-a-laying: 6 days of creation (Genesis 1)

7 swans-a-swimming: 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12)

8 maids-a-milking: the Beatitudes (Matt 5)

9 ladies dancing: the 9 fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22)

10 lords-a-leaping: 10 Commandments (Ex 20)

11 pipers piping: 11 faithful disciples

12 drummers drumming: 12 points of belief in the Apostles Creed

When you hear this catchy tune during the holidays this year, think about the true meaning behind the secret symbols. Look up the passages and "think about it". It's interesting and creative; written to inspire us through the ages. Only now, we can sing our hearts out in total freedom. Now we know how that strange song became a Christmas Carol that children and adults still sing five centuries later.