Wonder! That's what we remember most from our childhood experiences of Christmas. The wonder of Christmas trees, lights, ornaments, gifts, candles at church on Christmas Eve, and eagerly awaiting the arrival of Santa in our home.

As we matured, the wonder turned into questions. Why did God send Jesus to the earth as a baby? How did anyone know that Jesus was God's son? What kind of Messiah is this who lifts up the lowly? What does it mean that Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us?" How does Jesus save us?

We are grateful to have grown up in families where questions were always welcomed and our parents and pastors encouraged faith to emerge from the struggle.

In his *Letters to a Young Poet*, Ranier Maria Rilke says, "Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves... And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer."

We encourage you to patiently love the questions this Advent. Embrace the mystery of God entering our world. Allow the questions to shape your response to God's great gift of love in Jesus Christ. Most of all, allow Jesus to walk with you as you live into the answers.

Pastors Laurie and Gary Haller

Staff

Rev. Laurie Haller
Rev. Gary Haller
Senior Pastors

Rev. Lindsey Hall
Associate Pastor

Rev. Suzanne Walls
Associate Pastor

Rev. Zack Dunlap
Associate Pastor

Casey Proch
Director of Music

Doris Hall
Organist

Kelly Willian
Director of Children, Family, High School and College Ministries

Mary Feldmaier
Director of Membership and Congregational Care

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Advent and Christmas

at Birmingham First United Methodist Church

Advent Sunday Worship

November 29, December 6, 13 and 20
"The Questions of Christmas"

Traditional Worship
8:15, 9:30 & 11:00 AM in the Sanctuary
Nursery care and Sunday School at 9:30 & 11:00
Advent candle lighting at all services

Join us as we examine the questions of Christmas that announce and celebrate the coming of Jesus into our world.

On December 6, Chancel Choir and professional orchestra will present a program of beloved Christmas carols during the 9:30 and 11:00 services.

Shine Contemporary Worship
11:00 AM in the Christian Life Center
Nursery care and Sunday School

Shine worship will also examine the questions of Christmas that announce and celebrate the coming of Jesus into our world.

On December 20, join us for a modern celebration of all that is good about Christmas. Live special music with a wide variety of instruments, videos, and a meaningful message centered around our families, entitled "Will You Be Home for Christmas?"

Advent Devotions

Receive a daily email with an Advent devotion written by a church member. Sign up at fumcbirmingham.org/e-mail-subscriptions. Begins November 29.

Midweek Services of Music, Prayer, and Holy Communion

Wednesdays - 7:40 AM in the Chancel

December 2:	Rev. Gary Haller
December 9:	Rev. Suzanne Walls
December 16:	Rev. Laurie Haller

Christmas Sunday Social with First Kids

Sunday, December 6
3:30-5:30 PM

A wonderful opportunity for our children and youth to share their special brand of Christmas joy with Seniors from our congregation. We will share dinner, crafts, fun and Christmas carols. Parents, please RSVP with Sheila Smith (248-646-6407 ext. 3124). Seniors, please RSVP with Sue Anderson Dale (248-646-6407 ext. 3160). The last day to sign up is December 1.

Heralds of Christmas

Sunday, December 13
4:00 & 6:00 PM in the Sanctuary

The choirs of First United Methodist Church join together in this annual event heralding the birth of Christ. Your heart will surely be filled with the joy of Christmas by the songs they offer.

Longest Night

Thursday, December 17
7:00 PM in the Sanctuary

Join us for a service of healing and hope. We recognize that grief and pain can surface during the holiday season, so all are invited to a quiet, meditative service that provides space to acknowledge our pain and seek comfort from God and our church community. Worship will include stories from our congregation, prayer, music and candle lighting.

Christmas Eve

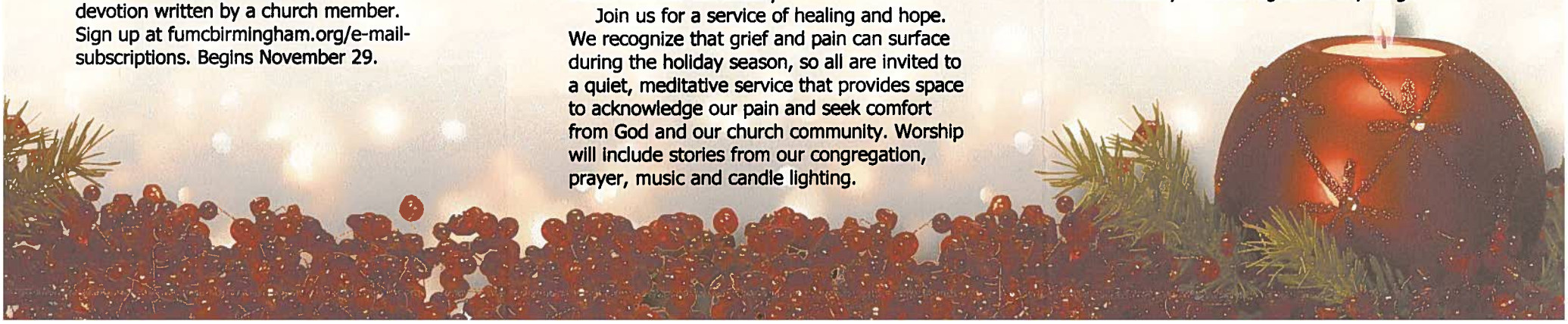
Thursday, December 24
2:00 PM in the Sanctuary
Lessons and Carols, Holy Communion
Rev. Gary Haller preaching: "Born in the Right Time!"

4:00 PM - "Welcome to Bethlehem"
A service in the sanctuary for children younger than 5 years old and their families. Costumed characters help to tell the Christmas story.

5:30 PM – "Come to the Manger"
A worship time for families in the Christian Life Center presented by children in first through fifth grades, telling the Christmas story in drama. Nursery care provided for children 2 years and younger.

7:00, 9:00 and 11:00 PM in the Sanctuary
Lessons, Carols and Choral Music
Rev. Gary Haller preaching: "Born in the Right Time!"
Holy Communion (7:00 & 11:00)
Nursery care for children younger than kindergarten age (7:00 only)

Sunday, December 27

Traditional Worship
9:30 AM only in the Sanctuary
Nursery care and Sunday School

Shine Contemporary Worship
11:00 AM in the Christian Life Center
Nursery care for ages 4 and younger