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The Lamplighter

The Newsletter of Emmanuel United Methodist Church



Advent BLESSINGS
of peace & joy.

"The virgin will be
with child and will
give birth to a son,
and they will call
him Immanuel"

MATTHEW 1:23

advent

The Lamplighter

Hope
Peace
Joy
Love

The Newsletter of Emmanuel United Methodist Church!

Hello December

DECEMBER 2023

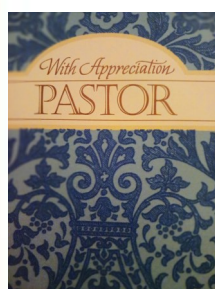
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Do you have something for our newsletter? Send items to the editor, Rick Bergmann at lamplighter@eumcbeltsville.com



Celebration of Pastor Appreciation

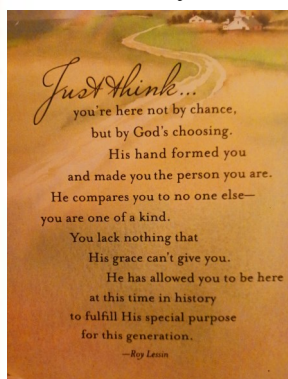
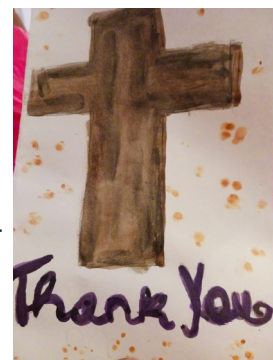


The celebration of Pastor's Appreciation Day at Emmanuel UMC has always been a very thoughtful and loving expression from the congregation. However, this year's celebration was unexpected and unforgettable!

When I heard Ted Ladd's voice say, "We have gifts...", my radar was set for a beautiful floral arrangement and a lovely card. Instead, I was overjoyed and overwhelmed by literal baskets full of

gifts!

The bright and beautiful yellow mums overflowed in a wicker basket, and a woven basket adorned with ribbons contained gifts and cards from my Emmanuel family: An opulent Pastor's Appreciation card, a sentimental DaySpring card, an artfully hand painted cross on a greeting card, a Thomas Kinkade perpetual calendar, a gift certificate to Sierra Grille (one of my favorite spots to dine), a gift card from Bath and Body Works (can't wait to shop!), a fragrant bottle of Lemon Grass and Coconut Body Oil, three beautiful bars of boxed Honeysuckle



Soap, healing Organic Dandelion Chai Tea, a luxurious and versatile Vera Bradley scarf, and finely crafted earrings with a coordinating necklace!

I savored opening every gift and reading each card! Your gifts and words of appreciation have touched me deeply.

To top it all off, when the Praise Band sang a special song ("A Whole Lot of Paddlin") for me, I was flabbergasted and delighted!

Thanks so very much to all of you for making my day special because I certainly felt truly appreciated.

Pastor King

The Idea of Church Has Changed

By Rick Bergmann



Why don't we do X anymore? We used to always do Y, what happened? Why hasn't the Pastor done Z, and what are they waiting for? These are the questions that many of us spout as we see changes in church. We seem to think that the church is different from how it used to be. The truth is, it is not. Honestly, it is not supposed to be. Churches are entities that have to change, adapt, accept, invite, recreate, and become new again in order to thrive. Churches that do not do these things do not survive.

Change is scary, change is difficult, and change can be disheartening at times. Change does not happen overnight; it is a gradual process. The problem I see with changes in the church is that we often think because we introduce a new ministry, a fresh style of music, a new community outreach, that people will begin streaming through the doors wanting to tithe and sit in the pews. The reality is this is not the way it works. In 1 Corinthians it says "Do not fool yourself. Do not think that you can be wise merely by being relevant." (The Message). Making changes in the church is a good thing, but it is a hollow gesture if there is not any Christianity behind it.

There has been a lot of change at Emmanuel over the last two decades. Ministers and Ministries have come and gone, members have moved on due to retirement, job changes, and life in general. Children that once roamed our halls have now grown up and are living lives of their own. The ministries that we once loved are no longer there. But that does not mean that the church has stopped being relevant to the community.

Instead of thinking about all of the things that are no longer here, focus your attention on what we are providing. We provide a building where a school is able provide a Christian Education for dozens of area children, we provide a safe space for people struggling with addiction to have weekly meetings with Narcotic's Anonymous, we provide a space for community members to teach values such as loyalty, honor, and leadership through the scouting programs, we provide a space for community members to learn about the joy and creativity of live theater, we provide a space for The Lion's Club to meet monthly, we provide a space for a small church from Zimbabwe to worship, we provide space for organizations like Beltsville Community Cats to hold fundraising events so that they can continue to do work in the community, we provide storage space for a member to collect clothes to send overseas to those who need them. These are just a few of the things that Emmanuel is able to give.

The book of Isaiah reminds us "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Sometimes we become so preoccupied with the past that we cannot see the future that sits in front of us.

As we close out 2023 and prepare for 2024, think about what you can do at Emmanuel. What can you bring to move us forward into a new season? I can already hear the questions and the responses, "I'm not as young as I used to be, I can't get out as often as I used to, I don't have the financial means I had when I was younger, I don't know what the church needs help with." Each one of us is able to do at least one thing. It may be filling up containers of juice for Sunday communion, it might be calling people and praying with them, it might be showing up 15 minutes early to service to turn on the candles or hand out bulletins, it might be volunteering for an hour a week to teach a Sunday School Class. There are hundreds of things that a member of church can do, you just need to ask. Also, you may have an idea for something new. The thing I am reminded of is that in the United Methodist Church, pastors come and go, it is the people who maintain the church. It is time for us to be the people of the church again. Pray about what you can do? Ask the pastor, or Ted Ladd, or another member of the leadership what are some ways you can help? Instead of dwelling on what we used to do in the past, think about what we can do in the future! It does not have to be big; it does not have to be flashy. Let us remember what is written in 1 Corinthians, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Jesus did not spend time complaining about how things are different from they were in the past, he went out and led people to a new future.



Farewell Elmo Webb

Although most people generally knew that Elmo had served as a military veteran of two wars and also as a police officer, how many people knew he worked for the U.S. Secret Service? As a Marine he was stationed at the White House where he guarded the First Ladies and served under six different U.S. Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, and James "Jimmy" E. Carter. Elmo often commented on the extreme kindness of both Ladybird Johnson and Rosalynn Carter, with whom he took photographs during his tenure.

A plaque marking Elmo's retirement from the Secret Service. It reads:

"To Lieutenant Elmo Webb. You have my warmest congratulations on your retirement from the Uniformed Division of the United States Secret Service.

The responsible manner in which you have handled your assignments over the years is deeply appreciated.

I am pleased to extend my thanks and my best wishes to you for the future.

**Sincerely,
Jimmy Carter**

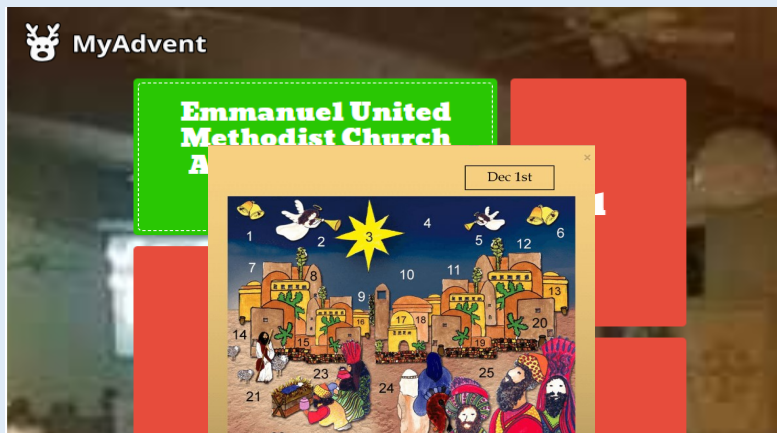


Our hearts and prayers are with all those who grieve, especially during the Christmas season. As we prepare for Christmas, we have special prayers for the family of Steve Lear, who was born on December 25. To honor his memory, please remember to be kind. You don't know what the person next to you may be going through.

Virtual Advent Calendar

By Rick Bergmann

For Advent this year, we have rethought our Advent Devotional from previous years. Instead of a physical booklet, we have created a Virtual Advent Calendar on our website. Each day beginning December 1 you will be able to click on the date and inside will be a devotion that was submitted by a member of Emmanuel through the years. This year our calendar has been created from the previous editions of Emmanuel's Advent Devotional. In the future we will solicit new devotion submissions. Each day's devotion will be also be posted on our Facebook page and Instagram Account. To see the calendar you can go to <https://www.eumcbeltsville.com/adventcalendar> but you won't be able to open any of the doors until the that date.



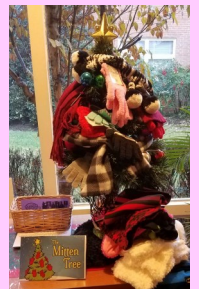
Emmanuel's Virtual Advent Calendar will be live at <https://www.eumcbeltsville.com/adventcalendar> beginning Friday December 1st!

Congratulations to Ricky Whitecotton who has successfully completed the requirements and has attained the full approval of the Washington East District and Baltimore-Washington Conference to become a Certified Lay Speaker! Emmanuel UMC is so very proud of Ricky's accomplishment! May he be an inspiration for others who may be considering the same path on their spiritual journey!

A certified lay speaker is a certified lay servant whose call has been affirmed by the conference committee on lay servant ministries to serve the church in pulpit supply in accordance and compliance with ¶341.1 The certified lay speaker serves by preaching the Word when requested by the pastor, district superintendent.



Coming soon to a narthex near you: a mitten tree! UWFaith plan to collect mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves for students at local elementary schools. More details (as to when) will be forthcoming—look for announcements in the bulletin and emails.



United Women in Faith

Congratulations to the amazing women of United women in Faith of Emmanuel! They have been presented with a certificate “for being a 5-star Unit in 2023” with the Washington-East District. We are grateful for all that you do!

December is National Seasonal Affective Disorder Month

By Judy Dietrich

December is National Seasonal Affective Disorder Month better known as SAD. Now that daylight savings time is over, a lot of people get depressed and sad with the sun setting before 5 pm. There are special lights you can buy to help alleviate the symptoms. Just be aware of your feelings and check with your doctor if you are very depressed. Also December has lots of holidays and if you have a mental disorder, it can be a very stressful month. Check in with friends and family to see if they are okay. If depression seems severe, remind them that help is only a phone call away. 988 is the national hotline number just for mental health issues. You can call 24/7 and talk to a mental health person right away. Please have a happy, healthy holiday this December! And take care of each other!

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

If you've got the **winter blues**, you may actually be experiencing **seasonal affective disorder**.

Seasonal affective disorder is a type of depression that comes and goes with the seasons. It usually starts in the late fall and early winter and goes away during the spring and summer.

SYMPTOMS:

- ❄ Sadness
- ❄ Low energy
- ❄ Gloomy outlook
- ❄ Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- ❄ Feeling hopeless, worthless, and irritable
- ❄ Carbohydrate cravings and weight gain
- ❄ Loss of interest or pleasure in activities you used to enjoy
- ❄ Thoughts of death or suicide



Are you or loved one may be experiencing seasonal affective disorder?
Help is just a click or a call away.

Visit [tricare.mil/crisislines](https://www.tricare.mil/crisislines) to learn more.

Those we lost in 2023

Jim Butcher
Paul Galloway
Robert Haas
Othell Heath
Doris Humphrey
Paul Kepple
Jeanette C. Simms
Ruth Smith
Roseanne "Timmie" Warner
Elmo Webb



Lay Servant Lectern: “Beyond the Babble at Babel”

By Ricky Whitecotton



I just wanted to take an opportunity to transmit some additional thoughts on my recent sermon here.

The Tower of Babel... Long ago, no... long, long ago I got interested in this story, there are far more questions offered than answers. Even when you start digging a little deeper, with the help of the internet, there are more unknowns than knowns. So, here are some educated guesses:

Location- The plain of Shinar – possibly Babylonian, it appears to be a Babylonian word. It may be Sumerian. It is accorded to the cities founded in the kingdom of Nimrod. This is in that bit of land we call the “Fertile Crescent” Mesopotamia. In modern times, we associate Iraq with Babylon.

Nimrod – A “Mighty hunter in the earth”, the grandson of Noah. Not mentioned in my text choice but noted previously. Surely some early ruler of significance.

The tower – Perhaps a ziggurat. The pyramidal form that was constructed as early as 3,000 B.C. The Tower of Babel has been set at approximately 2200 B.C. such a tower was constructed of clay bricks, which were cemented by pitch (tar or asphalt). They were built with steps and tiers, which could have been plazas. Surviving structures range from 50 to 332 feet tall. There are no internal rooms, and they have a square or rectangular form. They are similar in shape to other ancient pyramidal buildings occurring around the world made of varied materials.

Spiritual significance – Ziggurats are related to the deity Marduk, thus from the perspective of Jewish scripture, an idol. Thus, we can see a causal link as to why God may have wished folks to be dispersed-to break up the idol worship!

Please recall, most of the Old Testament is a written record of oral history. This takes nothing away from the concept of inspired literature. The older the narrative, the more oral tradition seems present to the reader. They are a record of tales passed down through the generations to explain to the next generation where people came from, why they exist, how they were created, the struggles to survive, and all the human pathos. I feel the story has or had two purposes. The first to explain why some people you may encounter speak a different language, are dressed or act differently (how did that all happen?). The second looks like a story to tell a cautionary tale about human pride or human solutions rather than relying on God’s providence.

I felt, as I stated, it is a clear way to describe the jumbled way languages and dialects develop. I am a country boy, when I visited my cousins, in Chicago...I could not understand my relatives who lived a few hundred miles from me. I have no gift or skill with languages, they are a mystery to me. The mental picture of people working cooperatively together one moment then the next not being able to communicate is stark and gives a clear picture...a bookend to my story.

Acts, yet again, a favorite book of mine. It is filled with wonderful and heroic, miraculous actions, deeds and people. The Book of Acts was written about 1,900 years ago; far closer to us than Genesis. It perhaps has a similar purpose, to capture the deeds (acts) of the early church, both Apostles (Elders) and Deacons (Servers), and other folks who enter the story. In Acts 2 we find a wide gathering of people. Who were they? Most likely Jewish worshippers, coming to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost marked the end of the Passover holiday period. What an easy adoption for the early church, in relating Easter to Passover, and Pentecost as the culmination. So, consider the Jewish diaspora or dispersion of the Jewish peoples. They lived among many other nations, and adopted the language of their homelands, no doubt, with clothing and perhaps some local food choices, and so on. But many would gather in the highest holy place of Jerusalem on such a holiday. So, we have a ready audience that cannot converse gathered. When the Holy Spirit settles on the Apostles, they instantly are charged with a spiritual force, and exhibit gifts. The gift of tongues (which is often quite controversial still), is one of many spiritual gifts. You can have widely varying understandings of this gift, along with several others. However, you interpret the scene noted in the text, the Apostles were preaching (and it appears they were all preaching simultaneously).

Continued on the next page

Lay Servant Lectern continued from previous page

They were telling the story of Jesus, His work, His death, and resurrection. The gathered people, each in their home language, heard the same story. So, at face value, no matter how you can work to rationalize this narrative, it is miraculous. For the sake of my sermon, it was the second bookend. It completed the purpose, it signified that God had provided a way for all people to come together, in love.

My opinion on Acts is currently that the writer (ascribed to Luke) around 100 A.D. recorded this narrative to convey to that current generation of Christians what happened at the beginning of the church. Likely there is some condensation of stories, there are amplified stories to highlight a point. The Greeks and Romans were both literate cultures, not all gentiles were. Some lived in a world of oral tradition, just as the early Jewish people did. I am more prone to take the record of events, even noting they may be amplified to prove a point, as factual from Acts. They are telling a miraculous story and trying to convey the point that Jesus is for anyone and everyone.

We live today in the shadow of the book of Acts, we are still a church made up of the world, with a mission to reach the whole world for Jesus. This book should give us hope and build our faith.

Lastly, I need to inform you that the Conference has accepted me as a certified Lay Speaker. It has been a journey, thank you all for being with me along the way.

If you want more information on the Lay Servant program, please ask me!

May God continue to richly bless you all!

Ricky

- 01. Motunrayo Oluwafemi
- 03. Ann Rowland
- 07. John Stewart
- 13. Cheryl Grays
- 15. Rebecca Cavallo
- 26. Alexandra Scotland
- 30. Kim Hiner, Maggie (Leatherman) Jackson



Worship Through Giving: How Can I Give?
Online: www.eumcbeltsville.com/giving or scan the QR Code below. This is a great way to keep up with your giving if you are out of town, are sick or if you can't come to church.
Through the Mail: mail your offering to 11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705.



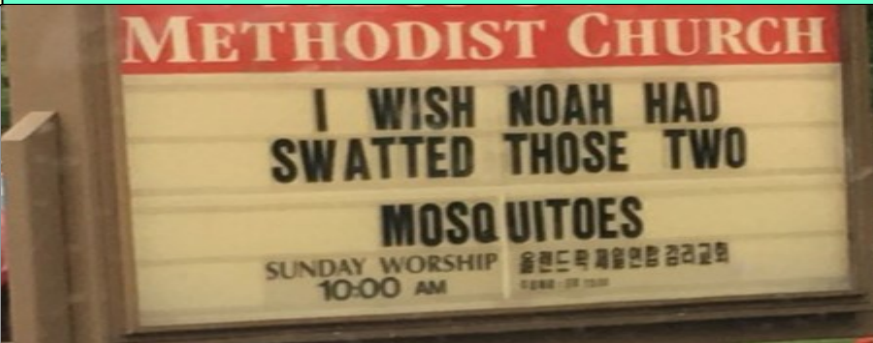
Please pray for our homebound

Glen and Pauli Colburn
Bob Humphrey
Ernie Kilbourne
Out of state: Lil Mizzer



Christian Love and Sympathy to

Christian Love and Sympathy to the Fatuga Family, The Family of Christina Keels, The Family of Shirley Meyers, and The Family of Steve Lear.



Join us on Sunday mornings in hybrid worship in person or through Zoom. Worship begins at 10 am.

Use this link if you wish to attend virtually:

<https://zoom.us/j/97839889289?pwd=YzUxZjJKTzUybTJnZEt4UC9qTkI4QT09> or go to zoom.us and click join a meeting.

The meeting number is 978 3988 9289. The Password is EUMC

You can call in on any telephone (cell or landline) at 1-301-715-8592

If you're calling on the telephone the information is

Meeting ID: 978 3988 9289 Passcode: 479360



A Prayer for Israel and Palestine (Prayer from the Uniting Church Assembly)

God of Comfort, send your Spirit to encompass all those whose lives are torn apart by violence and death in Israel and Palestine. You are the Advocate of the oppressed and the One whose eye is on the sparrow. Let arms reach out in healing, rather than aggression. Let hearts mourn rather than militarize.

God of Justice, give strength to those whose long work for a just peace might seem fruitless now. Strengthen their resolve. Do not let them feel alone. Show us how to support their work and bolster their courage. Guide religious leaders to model unity and reconciliation across lines of division. Guide political leaders to listen with their hearts as they seek peace and pursue it. Help all people choose the rigorous path of just peace and disavow violence.

God of Love, we lift up Palestine and Israel — its people, its land, its creatures. War is a monster that consumes everything in its path. Peace is a gift shared at meals of memory with Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Let us burn incense, not children. Let us break bread, not bodies. Let us plant olive groves, not cemeteries. We beg for love and compassion to prevail on all your holy mountains.

God of Hope, we lift up the cities of the region: Gaza City and Tel Aviv, Ramallah and Ashkelon, Deir El Balah and Sderot, so long divided, yet so filled with life and creativity. Come again to breathe peace on your peoples that all may recognize you.

God of Mercy, even now work on the hearts of combatants to choose life over death, reconciliation over retaliation, restoration over destruction. Help us resist antisemitism in all its forms, especially in our own churches. All people, Israelis and Palestinians, deserve to live in peace and unafraid, with a right to determine their future together.

God of the Nations, let not one more child or elder be sacrificed on altars of political expediency. Keep safe all people from unjust leaders who would exploit vulnerability for their own distorted ends. Give wise discernment to those making decisions to pursue peace. Provide them insight into fostering well-being, freedom, and thriving for all. Teach all of us to resolve injustices with righteousness, not rockets. Guard our hearts against retaliation, and give us hearts for love alone. Strengthen our faith in you, **O God of All Flesh**, even when we don't have clear answers, so that we may still offer ourselves non-violently for the cause of peace. Amen.

Cooking with Pastor King: Cobbler Cups



Ingredients:

Canned peach slices
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 tablespoon salted butter
1/2 tablespoon salted butter melted

3 tablespoons milk
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 cup all-purpose flour (if using self-rising, omit baking soda)
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Directions:

1. First, melt 1/2 tablespoon butter in a 10 to 12 ounce microwave safe mug with 3 to 4 peach slices and 1/2 tablespoon of brown sugar for 30 seconds.
 2. Then, in another cup or small bowl, whisk 1/2 tablespoon melted butter with 1 tablespoon brown sugar, vanilla, milk, flour, baking powder (if needed), and cinnamon until the ingredients are just combined.
 3. Next, spoon the batter into the mug over the peaches. Do not stir. Place 3-4 peach slices on top, sprinkle with 1/2 tablespoon of brown sugar and an extra pinch of cinnamon if desired. Add remaining 1/2 tablespoon of butter on top.
 4. Finally, microwave on full power for 1 to 2 minutes, depending on your microwave. I strongly recommend that you check after 1 minute, then continue cooking for 30 secs at a time until reaching the 2 minute mark. The good thing about this recipe is that you should have extra peach slices left over for the second round of cooking!
- You can use this same recipe with thinly sliced (and peeled) apple slices, fresh sliced peaches, pears, or experiment with other fruit or berry options.*
- This recipe makes one serving, but it can be easily multiplied, especially for a dinner or party. You can serve your cobbler cup(s) with ice cream or whipped cream.*



Fall Festival at Duckworth

Pastor King spent time at the Duckworth Regional School's Fall Festival on Friday, October 27 handing out treats with the staff. Treats were donated by UpStage Artists and Emmanuel! It was a great day with the staff and students of Duckworth.



Pastor King and Staff at Duckworth Regional School prepare treats for the students at Duckworth's Fall Festival.



Pastor King and Staff take time to rest and snap a photo after a busy Fall Festival!

History of Hymns: 'The First Noel'

By Michael C. Hawn

"The First Noel"

Anonymous, Traditional English Carol,
The United Methodist Hymnal, 245

*The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in field where they lay keeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.*

*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.*

This Epiphany carol raises several questions. First, "What is a carol?" While the majority of carols are associated with Christmas, the folk carol tradition was employed at other high seasons of the Christian year, including Holy Week and Easter. Although Christmas carols are found throughout the world, their origin is largely European. Usually, no author or composer can be ascribed to them. Historically, carols would have been sung outside the Catholic Mass in non-liturgical gatherings and spread through oral tradition. In their earliest forms, the carols would have been ways of preserving and spreading biblical or quasi-religious narratives among those who were not literate.

Christmas hymns, by contrast, are a part of the literate song tradition. While carols began to flourish during the medieval era, Christmas hymns can be traced back to the fourth century during the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) and subsequent councils, where the adoption of the Nicene Creed defined the nature of Christ in what became orthodox theology.



Magi from 3rd-century Sarcophagus in Vatican Museum

Continued on the next page

History of Hymns continued from previous page



The First Noel

Early Latin hymns from this time were polemical statements that explained the doctrine of the Incarnation in opposition to Arianism, a concept that asserted that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was created by God at a specific point in time and was an entity distinct from God the Father, and therefore subordinate to the Father. “Corde natus de Parentis” (“Of the Father’s love begotten,” The United Methodist Hymnal, 184) is one of the most famous hymns from this era that is still sung. The Spanish judge Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (c. 348–c. 413) left a legacy for the church’s sung faith that has lasted for centuries. See the following link for a discussion of this hymn: <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-of-the-fathers-love-begotten>.

Since that time, telling the story of the birth of Christ in song has been an important tradition, especially in the Western Church. Since congregational participation, including singing, was very limited in the medieval Catholic Mass, the people’s song developed outside the church. In most cases, the composers of these carols have long been lost in time, partly a function of their oral tradition. Undoubtedly, carols existed in oral forms long

before being published in collections.

The second question is, “What does ‘Noel’ mean?” “Nowell,” the English transliteration, comes from the old French “Nouel” or “Noël,” modern French. The derivation of this word probably relates to the earlier Latin term “natalis” or birth. In Latin, “Dies natalis” means “birthday.” Some suggest that “Noel” is also related to “novellare” or “nouvelle” meaning “new” —something to tell. As hymnologist and hymnwriter Carl P. Daw, Jr. indicates, The Oxford English Dictionary notes the earliest use of “Nowel” is in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1395) where the poet cites “The Franklin’s Tale” (1255): “And ‘Nowel’ crieth every lusty man” (Daw, 2016, 154).

“The First Noel” has its roots in the fifteenth century in its oral form, and it appeared on eighteenth-century broadsides in Helston, near Cornwall (Keyte and Parrott, 1992, 482). It was published first in the revised edition of *Some Ancient Christmas Carols* (1823), edited by Davies Gilbert. Its publication in the famous *Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern* (1833), compiled by William Sandys in London (Sandys, 1833, 74–75) increased the carol’s prominence. Originally in nine stanzas, five are commonly used in most hymnals today. Though the angels’ appearance to the shepherds (Luke 2:1–20) is the subject of the first stanza, most of the carol focuses on the journey of the magi (Matthew 2:1–12), giving the carol an Epiphany focus.

The melody of this carol is the subject of some speculation. The first printing of the tune comes from *Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern* (1833) by William Sandys (See <https://archive.org/details/christmascarolsa00sandrich/page/194/mode/2up>). This version of the tune was transcribed from a Cornwall collection (1827) and, indeed, bears some resemblance to other tunes from this region. The stanzas consist of two sections that are identical plus the refrain that is so similar that it appears to be a variant of the first two. Rather than a standard Bar Form (AAB), the musical structure of many German tunes like LOBE DEN HERRN (“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,” The United Methodist Hymnal, 139), this tune is AAA’.

British hymnologist Erik Routley (1917–1982), never one to mince words, noted: “But may we not whisper that THE FIRST NOWELL, beloved though it is, is really a terrible tune?” Recalling the extreme repetition, he concludes, “Something has gone amiss, surely, with the transmission of this tune” (Routley, 1958, 96). Perhaps, however, the musical structure is closer to the medieval storytelling form *chanson de geste*. This musical structure was used by clerics between the eleventh and twelfth centuries to tell epic stories in northern France. While little of the music is preserved, the *chanson de geste* repeated a simple melodic formula to tell the story, very similar to the melodic structure of our carol. For this author, this seems to be a more logical explanation of the extreme repetition in the melody rather than some other speculations, including notions that the singer forgot the proper melody, or it was transmitted improperly. Furthermore, Cornwall, on the southeastern tip of England, is on the English Channel directly across northern France. The telling of the story may have superseded the need for an interesting melody.

Continued on the next page

History of Hymns continued from previous page

Undoubtedly, the melody and text have been smoothed out over the centuries to the form we have it today, but its essential character probably remains intact. An early version of the first couplet reads: “The first Nowell that the Angel did say / Was to three poor shepherds in fields as they lay.” The Cornish Songbook (1929), edited by Ralph Dunstan, prints the first stanza as follows:

*O well, O well, the Angels did say
To shepherds there in the fields did lay;
Late in the night a-folding their sheep,
A winter's night, both cold and bleak.
O well, O well, O well, O well,
Born is the King of Israel.*

Since the carol was transmitted by aural/oral tradition, it is not impossible that the lesser-known French word “Noël” sounded like “O well.”

Sir John Stainer (1840–1901) standardized the melody as we know it and provided a harmonization that has become the customary one today. Sandys published Stainer’s arrangement in *Christmas Carols New and Old* (1876). The eight-measure melody appears twice for each stanza, plus the refrain variant. Stainer enhanced the refrain by allowing the tenors to soar to a high F-sharp on the final “Noel,” giving it a sense of climax, while the soprano maintains the repetition throughout. Tenors look forward to taking the spotlight at that point, leaving the sopranos on the original tune that becomes a less interesting countermelody. See Stainer’s setting of the song in *Christmas Carols New and Old* (1850 edition) at the following link: <https://archive.org/details/christ00bram/page/12/mode/2up>. Then listen to the Staple Hill Salvation Army Band playing Stainer’s version at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iznOSxywgo4>.

English folksong collector Cecil Sharp (1859–1924) discovered another version (Sharp, 1914, 26–27), indicating the popularity of oral transmission and retelling the nativity narrative:

10.—NOWELL AND NOWELL.

SUNG BY MR. BARTLE SYMONS,
WHO LEARNT IT MANY YEARS AGO FROM MR. SPARGO (70 OR 80 YEARS OF AGE),
Noted by Cecil J. Sharp and Mr. Bartle Symons. CAMBORNE, CORNWALL.

No - well and No-well, the An-gels did say, While shep - herds there in the fields did lay; Lay-ing in one night and fol - ding their sheep, A win - ter's night both cold and bleak. No - well and No - well, No - well and No - well, Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

2 And then there did appear a star
To wise men three in country far;
And to the earth it gave a great light,
And there it continued a day and a night.

26

The repeated “Noel” (or “Nowell” in some hymnals) has the character of spreading the good news— “born is the King of Israel.” A final stanza, occasionally used in hymnals, draws all humanity into the story and extends the birth account to the story of salvation and Christ’s suffering. Though the use of “mankind” has probably limited its use in current hymnals, this stanza places the birth of Jesus into the fuller context of redemption:

*Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
That hath made heaven and earth of nought,
And with his blood mankind has bought.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.*

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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EMMANUEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
BELTSVILLE, MD
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 <p><i>Advent Begins December 3</i></p>			<p>1 9:30-2:30 Office Hours 7:30 pm The Best Christmas Pageant Ever</p>	<p>2 5 pm NA 7:30 pm The Best Christmas Pageant Ever</p>		
<p>3 10 am Worship 2 pm Zimbabwe Church in Fellowship Hall 2 pm The Best Christmas Pageant 6 pm Boy Scouts in Chester Stewart Room</p>	<p>4 9:30-2:30 Office Hours 7 pm Auditions A Raisin In The Sun In The Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>5 Office closed</p>	<p>6 9:30-2:30 Office Hours 7 pm Auditions A Raisin In The Sun in The Fellowship Hall 7pm The Lions Club in The Chester Stewart Room</p>	<p>7 Office closed</p>	<p>8 9:30-2:30 Office Hours 7:30 pm The Best Christmas Pageant Ever</p>	<p>9 5 pm NA 7:30 pm The Best Christmas Pageant Ever</p>
<p>10 10 am Worship 2 pm The Best Christmas Pageant 6 pm Boy Scouts in Chester Stewart Room</p>	<p>11 9:30-2:30 Office Hours</p>	<p>12 Office closed</p>	<p>13 9:30-2:30 Office Hours 7 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>14 Office closed</p>	<p>15 9:30-2:30 Office Hours</p>	<p>16 5 pm NA</p>
<p>17 10 am Worship 2 pm Zimbabwe Church in Sanctuary 6 pm Boy Scouts in Chester Stewart Room</p>	<p>18 9:30-2:30 Office Hours</p>	<p>19 Office closed</p>	<p>20 9:30-2:30 Office Hours 7 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>21 Office closed</p>	<p>22 9:30-2:30 Office Hours</p>	<p>23 8 am Food Distribution 5 pm NA</p>
<p>24 11 am Worship/ Christmas Eve Cantata with Praise</p>		<p>26 Office Closed</p>	<p>27 9:30-2:30 Office Hours</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29 9:30-2:30 Office Hours</p>	<p>30 5 pm NA</p>
<p>31 10 am Worship</p>						



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