



Lexington United Methodist Church

979-773-2728

lexingtonunitedmethodistchurch@outlook.com

Visit www.lexingtonumc.org for more information.



Dear LUMC Family,

Every year, the holidays prompt me to slow down. I love the holiday season; Thanksgiving is such a great time to index my heart toward gratitude. Christmas is one of my favorite times of year, New Year's, all of it is so much fun. Every fall, as we near Thanksgiving, I think to myself, Oh, I really want to slow down this Christmas. I want to be present, I want to just be full of joy. I want to sit in my living room and enjoy my Christmas tree. I want to have a real fire going in the backyard, with Christmas music playing in the background, and play games with Eleanor. I want to be full of delight and gratitude.

But if your experience is anything like mine, it is easy to get sucked into the hurry, busyness, shopping, materialism, and overload of the Christmas season. Suddenly, New Year's rolls around, and I'm exhausted, I'm on edge, I'm snapping at my family. And I think to myself, how did I miss the joy of the holiday season? If that's been you, like it has been me, I want to invite you to join me in a few ways to slow down this season. An invitation into ways to pause our mind and body and life to be more present to the love and joy and peace and hope of Jesus this Advent season.

So, if you want to join me, I invite you to slow down with me and unhurry for the holidays. Here are seven ideas. None of these are legalistic rules, none of these are from the Bible per se, but just seven ideas for how to unhurry, how to slow your life down to really enjoy this holiday season and really to receive and give love to other people well, and that's really what matters more, more than just our enjoyment, which is excellent, but really our capacity to give and to receive love.

Number one on my list is getting off social media. Whether it is for the entire holiday season or just a short period of time. I don't need to see every single person I know's Christmas tree on Instagram. They are beautiful; but I want to experience one in my own living room. One idea for you is to go off social media for a set period you determine.

Another idea is to set aside some phone-free blocks of time. It could be one full day a week, it could be all day long on Christmas and Thanksgiving, it could be Monday, Wednesday, Friday from when you get home from work, say 6:00 p.m. until the next morning, you turn your phone all the way off and put it away and you're home those three nights or that Friday of every week or whatever it is, you're just home and you're present and you're there in the moment.

Number three, get your shopping done as early as possible. And as quick, not hurried, but quick, meaning close together as possible. So I don't know about you, but shopping is just such an engine. Alan Fadling once said that the drive to possess is an engine of hurry, meaning that the more we want to have for ourselves or even for others in generosity, the more it often just speeds us up to shopping, and this is not right. My perfectionism makes me a good gift-giver and a bad present-giver at Christmas time, a kind of person because I can spend so much time trying to get just the right gift. So buying fewer things, simple things, making gifts even yourself, or just getting all of your shopping done early.

We literally took a day, a vacation day, the day before Thanksgiving. We've made up our Christmas list, and our plan is to wake up early with internet access and our car later that afternoon, and get as much done as we possibly can that day. So for the whole Christmas season, we have our gifts. Once they come, we have a wrapping night and get them all into the tree. And then we can breathe and relax, without that hanging over our heads.

Continued



Enchilada Lunch

The Enchilada was a great success again this year! Thank you to our many volunteers it ran so smoothly and to Chuck Swisher for heading it up!!

Women's Group—Christmas Party and Ornament Exchange,
Sunday, December 7th from
3-5PM at Tina Woodward's
Home.

RSVP by text to Tina at
979-540-0421.

Light snacks provided. Bring a wrapped ornament if you wish to participate in the exchange.



Save the Date!

We will be having a Family Christmas Party in the Family Life Center on **Sunday, December 21st** starting at 5PM. We will have crafts and watch the movie "Star". Please bring a snack/finger food to share! We will provide popcorn and hot cocoa!

Please RSVP by text to
(979) 571-6934.

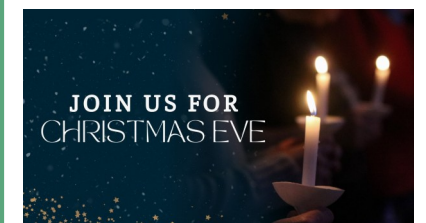
All are welcomed to join!



Angel Tree is for our local children who are in need. We work with the Elementary School to get a list of names of children/siblings in need this Christmas. This year you will reach out to **Terri Nolker at 512-964-5411**

for the Angels information: the age, gender, sizes and gift ideas. Gifts are to be wrapped and brought to the Church Office no later than **December 14th**.

Christmas Eve Service
December 24th
Worship at 5:00 P.M
In Church Sanctuary



A Gift was given to Lexington UMC

"...I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestor did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers."

2 Timothy 1:3

To make a memorial write "memorial" in the memo line of your check and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office.





2—William Langehennig
 5—Cherry Stover
 6—Lois Boyd
 6—Heather Ahrendt
 9—Lucy Reynolds
 11—Rodney Organ
 12—B.J. Brister
 12—Rebecca French
 17—Pat Ahrendt
 18—Judy Curnutte
 21—Raimond French
 25—Diane Scheler
 26—Monica Eberz
 28—Kate Kellenberger
 31—Trey Schumpert

We Appreciate You

We are so grateful
 for all of our
 volunteers!
 Please join us for
 a M&M's
 Volunteer
 Appreciation Meal
 Wednesday,
 December 10th at
 4PM in the Family
 Life Center.



Total Monthly Offerings for
October were \$11,085.

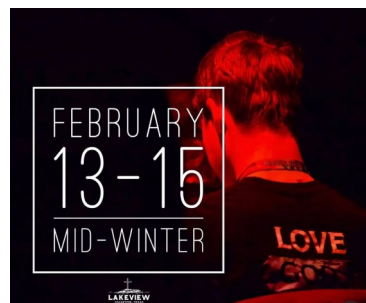
Thank you for continuing to send in your tithes!
 Ways of sending in your monetary gifts:

1. **At Church:** during service, at the church office, or the drop box on the office door.
2. **Online:** www.lexingtonumc.org on the "donate" page.
3. **Mail or Bill Pay** (through your bank):
 Po Box 116 Lexington, TX 78947
4. QR Code



The Annual **Thanksgiving Meal** with Ministerial Alliance was hosted by the Holy Family Catholic Church this year on Sunday, November 23rd at 6 PM. It was well attended and all enjoyed fellowship and food!! Thank you to all of our volunteers who sent Desserts!

We will be having a **Youth Group** Christmas Party on **Wednesday, December 17th** starting at 3:35PM and ending at 6:30PM. We will play games and watch the movie "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever". If you would like to help in some way please reach out to Holly Newton (979) 571-6934.



Counselors Needed

Mid-Winter camp at Lakeview will be **February 13-15, 2026**. This is just for Middle and High Schoolers. We have a large youth group and lots of kids wanting to go! However, before we sign up kids we need volunteers willing to go as counselors. We are currently looking for 3 female and 1 male adult willing to go. If you would like more information please let Holly Newton in the church office know.

M&M's

Our last M&M's for the fall semester was held on Wednesday, November 19th. M&M's will resume in January for the spring semester.

We are extremely thankful for all of our volunteers! With that we are hosting a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on Wednesday, December 10th at 4PM in the Family Life Center. We will enjoy a meal together and talk about the upcoming spring semester.



Backpack Buddies

You know Backpack Buddies as a program that helps feed children in our community, but did you know the recent shift to a four-day school week means we're now sending kids home with more food to last the long weekend? With the new four-day school week, we're now packing heavier bags to ensure children have enough food to get through the three-day weekend. We currently feed **55-60** children each week.

We can't do this alone. Your generosity helps keep this program going. Thank you to the many who currently support this program. You are so appreciated!

Join us in making a difference - one backpack at a time.

- **Donate:** Your financial support makes this program possible. Please add a note to your check or online donation to the Lexington Methodist Church to designate your gift for Backpack Buddies.
- **Volunteer:** Join us for a fun and rewarding packing session. We need groups and organizations to help us pack bags every 5-6 weeks.

Contact Terri Nolker at 512-964-5411 or terribowdenolker@gmail.com to schedule a time or get more information!

Your support, whether through
 donation, prayers, or volunteering, makes a real difference.



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The fourth idea is to practice the Sabbath. All of you know Sabbath is a part of my life; it's sewn into my muscle memory, and it's been life-changing for me. A lot of you already practice Sabbath, in which case, enjoy it extra, love in the holiday season. For those of you who don't yet, you're not on the bandwagon, this could actually be a great time to start practicing Sabbath, which might sound a little counterintuitive, but what better time of year to start? Or it could be a great time of year to experiment with it. If you're new to this practice and you want to just, well, what would it look like to take two or three Saturdays or Sundays and turn off my phone and not go shopping and out a bunch, but rest and delight and start a fire or sit around the house or whatever it is, practice a whole day, set aside for the four movements of Sabbath, stopping, resting, delighting, and worshiping.

Number five, follow some advent devotional, whatever it is that you want to come up with, whether it's a liturgical one or a book or even an app that you use where you have some kind of a daily or weekly space just to remember the Christmas story, to remember Jesus, to remember how the incarnation has changed everything, and to settle and center your soul in that reality of God with us.

Number six would be to really lean into and embrace tradition. I have a love-hate relationship with tradition, and there are some traditions that I'm antagonistic toward. Still, at Christmas, I don't know, that sentimental part of me comes alive. And I love the way that traditions really help us slow down, help us make space to be really present in the moment, and, for the most part, everybody I know has Christmas traditions. So if you don't, this could be a great year to start one, two, or 10 of them. If you do or you have some from your childhood, this could be a great time of year to start others.

There is a tradition from Iceland I've always wanted to adapt. If you've ever been there, you know that around winter, it's literally dark 24 hours a day. Because of that, Icelanders are avid readers. Now, there's an Icelandic tradition, called Jólábókaflóð (trying saying that out loud), where on Christmas Eve, you gift your favorite books to each other with chocolate. Then everybody climbs into bed early, reads a book or novel or whatever, and eats chocolate. I love chocolate and reading, so I'll be campaigning for this tradition in my family.

Finally, I would say practice what the way of Jesus calls the spiritual discipline of celebration: intentional acts of delight, gratitude, joy, feasting, where you just index your heart toward a joyful, grateful life in the kingdom of God. These could be practicing hospitality and throwing a neighborhood Christmas party. Going to a neighborhood Christmas party or having your friends over for dinner or baking or watching a Christmas movie or putting up a Christmas tree or playing Christmas music or having your favorite eggnog with your brother or sister or best friend or spouse. It could be any number of things, but really, intentionally lean into. Little habits, acts, activities, ideas, or traditions that index your heart toward joy. With all seven of these ideas, the end goal is not it's not to do more, it's to do less and to be more and more present to the moment, because the moment, even in the challenging moments of life, every moment is full of so much goodness, so much joy, so much to be thankful for, and more importantly, every moment is full of God and complete of whatever person is right in front of you. So may you be fully present to the moment this holiday season, to your family, to your friends, to whoever is across from you at the table or in your field of vision, may you be present to the God who's not only all around you, but is deep within you, and may you be present to your own soul, and may your soul meet that of God himself, and may you be filled with love and joy and peace this holiday season.

Blessings,
Pastor Chris



The **Central Texas Food Bank** is bringing free, healthy food to Lexington! Every month held at the **Lexington City Park at 10 a.m.** If you know of anyone who would benefit from this program please let them know. This month's mobile food pantry is **Tuesday, December 2nd.**

Our Prayer Group meets **every Tuesday** morning at **10 AM** in the middle class room to pray for those on our prayer list. Everyone is invited to join!



Weekly Emails

If you'd like to be added to the weekly email please send your e-mail address to:
Lexingtonunitedmethodistchurch@outlook.com
Or call the office at (979) 773-2728.

On Communion Sunday's (the first Sunday of the month), we take a special offering at the rail for the **St. Stephen's Fund**. This money is used to help those in need in our community. With this fund, we help people in emergency situations and those that may need some help with their utilities.



Saturday, December 6th from 4-6PM Ministerial Alliance will be hosting A Night in Bethlehem again this year. Families will wander through the bustling Bethlehem marketplace and discover what life was like when Jesus was born. Unlike your typical "living Nativity," everyone will create unique keepsakes as they interact with local shopkeepers who share the Christmas story. And...they'll love talking to Mary and Joseph in The Stable—and hearing about the miracle of Jesus' birth.

LUMC is in charge of the Carpentry Shop (some kind of craft).
Please reach out to the Church office if you are interested in more information or can help.



The Church Office will be closed
December 24th, 25th, 31st and January 1st.



Sunday Morning @ LUMC
Sunday School 10:30-11:15 a.m.
Men's Gathering; meet in the 2nd classroom with leader, John Gibbs
Journey Class for Adults; meet in the 1st Classroom