

# NICHOLS HILLS

## united methodist church



Dr. Trevor Smith

## Christmas Gifts

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” <sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was.

<sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure

chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. —*Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11*

I’m sure you have probably started shopping for Christmas gifts, but have you ever spent much time thinking about why we give gifts at Christmas? The tradition of giving Christmas gifts comes from the story of the Wise Men. When they worshiped the Christ child, they presented to him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold was an appropriate gift for a king. Frankincense was used in religious rites to indicate the presence of God. Myrrh was used as an embalming substance. These gifts tell us who this baby boy is. He is the King of the universe. He is God’s anointed high priest, the Messiah. And he is the suffering servant who dies to bring salvation to the world. This is who the Magi came to honor and worship.

I want you to notice what didn’t happen. Gaspar didn’t say to Balthasar, “Hey Balthasar, what do you want for Christmas this year?” Balthasar didn’t say to Melchior, “Hey Melchior, I’m making my list, and I’m checking it twice. I’m going to the mall later today. What do you want for Christmas?” They didn’t do that because they realized that they weren’t buying gifts for each other. They were bringing gifts to the Christ child.

Mike Slaughter has written a book called *Christmas is Not Your Birthday*. One of the great things he captures in it is that when we were growing up we realized that we had two birthdays every year. We had our birthday, and we had Jesus’ birthday. And both of them were great. When you’re a kid, everyone asks you, “What do you want for Christmas?” We kind of get the idea that this whole thing is a big party for us.

The retailers need it to be a big party for us. I’m not saying it’s wrong to buy gifts for each other. That’s part of the fun of Christmas. Even Saint Nicholas was following the tradition of the Magi when he gave gifts to the children who didn’t have anything. When we remember that Christmas is not our birthday, then we remember that Christmas is about something more, something deeper, something more profound than what you can buy at the mall. And then we realize that our gift giving should be not just about ourselves but really for people who can’t afford anything.

How did the Magi honor and worship Jesus? They gave their very best gifts to Jesus. As we journey through Advent I want you to understand that one of the most meaningful ways that we worship Jesus is by giving our very best gifts to Jesus. Just like the Magi, we give our very best to Jesus because he is the King, and he is worthy of our worship.

I hope you will plan to worship with us at 8:30 or 10:50 a.m. this Sunday as we talk more about the Wise Men’s Story and how we can journey to the manger and give our best to the Christ child.

Blessings,  
Trevor

## Ministry Calendar

### Sunday, December 6

Worship at 8:30 a.m.  
Sunday School at 9:45 a.m.  
Worship at 10:50 a.m.  
Cocoa and Carols at 5:00 p.m.

### Monday, December 7

Care Committee at 4:00 p.m.

### Wednesday, December 9

#### Nichols Thrills - 5:30 to 7:00

Fellowship Meal at 5:30 p.m.  
Young Adult Group at 5:30 p.m.  
Expedition Children’s Group-6:00  
Alpha Course for Adults at 6:00  
Chancel Choir at 7:30 p.m.

### Sunday, December 13

Worship at 8:30 a.m.  
Sunday School at 9:45 a.m.  
Worship at 10:50 a.m.

### Wednesday, December 16

The Learning Center Music Program at 10:30 a.m.

### Sunday, December 20

Worship at 8:30 a.m.  
Sunday School at 9:45 a.m.  
Worship at 10:50 a.m.

### Thursday, December 24

Candlelight Christmas Eve Services at 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.

Nichols Hills U.M.C.

(405)842-1486

(405)843-1835 Fax

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

The Learning Center:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday

9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Tuesday and Thursday

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

(405)842-5325

## Ministry Opportunities

### Hospitality Greeters

Do you like to smile and talk to people? Are you enthusiastic about our church? If so, please consider becoming one of the Sunday morning Greeters.

Greeters provide a welcoming smile to people walking in the door for our Sunday worship services. They encourage newcomers and visitors to get involved in a Sunday School Class, direct people to the restrooms or to the children's nursery area as necessary.

You can sign up to serve for 20 minutes on Sunday morning at one of three time slots: 8:15 to 8:35, 9:30 to 9:50, or 10:35 to 10:55. If this seems like an opportunity you would enjoy, please see Alfred Walker for more details.

### Coffee Hosts

Coffee hosts provide 8-9 dozen cookies. At the close of the 10:50 Service, the host(s) stand by the cookie table in the Narthex and greet people. We have openings for coffee hosts for **December 27 and all of January**. To serve, sign-up on the bulletin board outside the office.

### Cares and Concerns

#### Epworth Villa

Bill and Katie Alexander,  
Maxine Asch, Joanne Crosby,

#### Town Village

Joanna Garnett

#### The Fountains at Canterbury

Barney and Virginia Brown  
Anita Dahlgren

#### At Home

Roger Etling, Ann and Tom Flesher,  
Jess and Bette Harris,  
Beth & Dale Jordan, Frances Lewis,  
Joye McLain David Mueller,  
Maxine Permenter, and Gene Wheeler

### Transportation Ministry

Would you like to bring joy to someone by bringing them to church? If you would like to join our transportation ministry contact the church at 405-842-1486. This may just be one of the easiest ways for you to serve in our church and make a Christian difference.

## Does God Heal Today?



Matt Patrick

Throughout Scripture there are examples of miraculous signs, wonders, and healings. Some of them seem so outside of our experience that it can lead us to ask whether or not God still heals today. In my experience, I have witnessed people who have recovered or healed when doctors say they shouldn't have. I absolutely affirm the power of God to heal anyone God chooses to heal. However, as many of you know, many of our loved ones who were sick did not find physical healing. We aren't to understand this as God condemning or turning His back. God can always bring spiritual and mental healing to those who are sick and their families.

One of the hard realities of life is that sometimes people get hurt. Sometimes people get sick. Sometimes accidents happen. Not everything happens for a reason, but you can always be sure that whatever may happen, God will be with us. God does still heal today, but it may not always happen like these bombastic stories from the Bible. Many times God heals us everyday in ways that we may never notice.

I invite you to join us for a goo meal and the Alpha Course on Wednesday evening at 5:30 as we discuss the question *Does God Heal Today?* May God bless you this week.

Blessings,  
Matt

## Christmas Remembrances

Christmas is a time to remember our loved ones who have passed away and to honor our loved ones who have made a difference in our lives. This year, the Altar Guild has purchased our Christmas poinsettias, but we still wanted to give you the opportunity to remember or honor a loved one on our Christmas Remembrances List. If you would like us to remember or honor someone in this way, please call the church office.

Person to be remembered: \_\_\_\_\_

Person to be honored: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

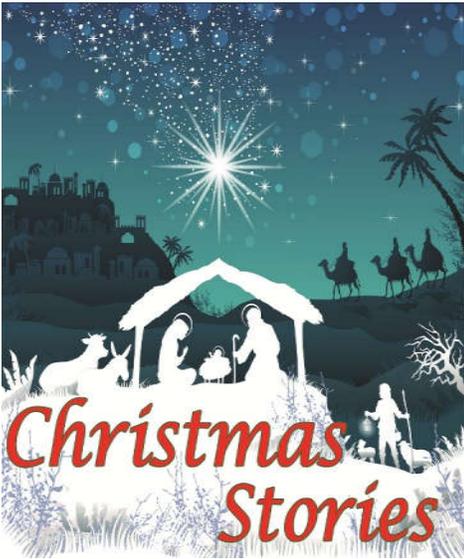
Relationship of the person to you: \_\_\_\_\_

## December Saturday of Service

Join us for our December Saturday of Service on Saturday, December 5th from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall to write cards to the teachers and staff of John Marshall High School, as well as our church members who are in care facilities or homebound. All ages are welcome, and you can sign up in the Narthex.

## Angel Tree

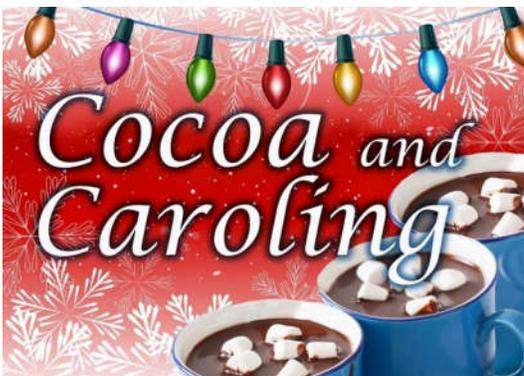
We invite you to participate in our Angel Tree this year. We are sponsoring 35 foster children from Child S.H.A.R.E. which is part of the Circle of Care. Each child has a card with their name on it and their wish list for presents. Please bring your unwrapped gift to church by Sunday, December 13. Thank you!



In the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season it's sometimes hard to find Christ in Christmas. Join us each Sunday during Advent as we explore the stories of those who sought Christ on that very first Christmas - the Wise Men, the Shepherds, even the murderous King Herod. We'll learn how their Christmas stories help us to find Christ in Christmas.

This holiday season, pause in the midst of your Christmas preparations to prepare your heart through worship. Each Sunday we'll share familiar carols, scriptures, and messages that offer encouragement and hope as we truly seek to worship Christ.

- December 6** *The Wise Men's Story*
- December 13** *Simeon and Anna's Story*
- December 20** *The Shepherds' Story*
- December 24** *Mary and Joseph's Story*



We invite you to join us for Cocoa and Caroling on Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall. Then we will take a hayride through the neighborhood to sing Christmas carols. Bring a plate of cookies to share. Afterwards, we will return to the church to warm up with hot cocoa. We hope you can join in the fun and festivities!

Blessings,  
Lauren

## A Special Thank You

We would like to say a special thank you to Jerry Jennings, Ellie Roberts, Jean Warner, Lynn Greene, and Beverly Pirtle who faithfully come every Wednesday to fold and label all of the newsletters! You are a blessing, and we are so grateful for you all! If you would like to get involved in our newsletter team, please call the church office at 405-842-1486.



## Tidbits from The Learning Center

Each year we provide several types of screenings to ensure The Learning Center children are developing in a typical manner. This week we have Prevent Blindness Oklahoma coming to screen the children's vision. Even infants six months old and up can have their vision evaluated for any potential needs. Our scanner uses a state of the art device to do this. 86 percent of children never have an eye exam. If we can catch something early enough and have proper correction it can prevent permanent vision loss. Good vision is such a gift that we take for granted unless there is an issue. Prevent Blindness Oklahoma is the only nonprofit agency in Oklahoma dedicated exclusively to eye health and safety. Helping even one child to receive better vision is worth it all. Last year we detected five children with issues and referred them to optometrists or ophthalmologists for comprehensive eye exams. Our screening will take place on Wednesday, December 2. See you then - no pun intended.



## Serving In Ministry December 6

The poinsettias are given by the Altar Guild in honor of the church staff.

The coffee hosts are Ron and Lida Elkins.

## December Birthdays

- 12/04 Maxine Asch  
Ronald McLeod
- 12/06 Jackie Hall  
Nancy Rowntree
- 12/07 Charlotte Brown  
Reid Robison
- 12/08 Maddy Eales
- 12/09 Larkin Warner  
Phil Withrow
- 12/10 Denise Buthion
- 12/11 Kelsey Lyle
- 12/12 Joe McClendon  
Katie McNeill
- 12/14 Stephen Heine
- 12/15 Tom McLain
- 12/16 Liz McNeill
- 12/18 Stephanie Derricott  
Casey Hill, III  
Kay Musser
- 12/20 Mark McLain
- 12/21 Libby Blankenship
- 12/22 Jean Ann Robison
- 12/25 Carol Solomon
- 12/29 Lida Elkins  
Joye McLain  
Taylor McLain
- 12/30 Abe Malone
- 12/31 Don Wilson



A special birthday cake was given on Sunday in honor of Alfred Walker's and Michael Hall's birthdays. Happy birthday!

Nichols Hills United Methodist Church  
1212 Bedford Drive  
Oklahoma City, Ok. 73116

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### Weekly Small Groups

**Nichols Thrills Fellowship Meal for Children, Youth, and Adults:** Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

**Young Adult Group:** Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. Join us for food, fellowship, and an Alpha Course discussion. Leader: Rev. Matt Patrick.

**The Alpha Course:** Wednesday, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Join us for dinner at 5:30 and a video called *What About the Church?*  
Leader: Dr. Trevor Smith.

**Expedition for Children:** Wednesday from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Director: Lauren Matthes.

**Chancel Choir:** Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. Director: Michael Wylder.

### Sunday School Classes - Sunday at 9:45 a.m.

**The Brew Class:** *Meets in the Room 131* - The Brew is starting a new book called, *United Methodist Beliefs – A Brief Introduction* by Bishop William Willimon.  
Teachers: Tim and Christie Baker. Tim (405) 209-5467 and Christie (405) 922-5154

**KIVA Class:** *Meets in the Parlor* - Buzz McDaniel will give a presentation based on the book "The First Christmas". Leaders: Allen and Sherron Evans.

**Reveille Class:** *Meets in the Library* - Do you like to see how your faith impacts your everyday life? Join us for a discussion of how the Bible speaks to the current events in our lives. Teacher: Tom Fraley

**Open Circle Class:** *Meets in the Archives Room* - Join us as learn from Bible scriptures and songs. Teacher: John Marshall.

**Roundtable Class:** *Meets in Room 124* - Join us as we learn how to remember and strengthen our relationship with and worship of God.  
Teacher: Dr. Jerry Perryman.

**Youth Class:** *Meets in the Youth Basement* - Join us for fun, fellowship, and a lesson that will bring you closer to God. Student Pastor: Rev. Matt Patrick.

**Children's Class:** *Meets in the Children's Area.* - Join us for a child-friendly lesson, snacks, and crafts as we learn about the Christmas Story together.  
Director: Lauren Matthes.

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**Dr. Trevor Smith**, Senior Pastor  
**Rev. Matt Patrick**, Student Pastor  
**Michael Wylder**, Director of Church Music  
**Lauren Matthes**, Director of Children and Family Ministry  
**Delaney Sheffield**, Administrative Assistant  
**Dr. Antone Godding**, Organist

**Kathy Smith**, Bookkeeper/Treasurer  
**Louise Glass**, Financial Secretary  
**Denise Buthion**, Director of The Learning Center  
**Michael Hall**, Maintenance/Custodian  
**Alfred Walker**, Sunday Host  
**Randall Blair**, Sunday Host

405-842-1486 • 405.843.1835 Fax • [www.nicholshillsumc.org](http://www.nicholshillsumc.org)  
The Learning Center (T.L.C.): 405-842-5325