



Hidden Christmas

Rediscovering the Truth Behind the Birth of Christ An Advent and Christmas Worship Series

Join Ortega Church as we share the reflective Season of Advent to prepare our hearts for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas. Advent begins Sunday, November 28 and continues until the congregation gathers for Christmas Eve Worship. Each week the Sanctuary is adorned with new visual attributes to excite our preparations: The Advent Wreath, Chrismon Tree and Greenery; and Poinsettias.

The Advent Wreath will be our guide through the season as we share our sacred story while lighting:

-  The Candle of Hope – Sharing the Angel’s Message of Hope
-  The Candle of Peace – Celebrating the Shepherd’s Message of Peace
-  The Candle of Joy – Remembering the Wisemen’s Message of Joy
-  The Candle of Love – Pondering Mary’s Message of God’s Love



Christmas Eve Worship and Live Nativity

Ortega Church celebrates Jesus’ birth with two Christmas Eve Worship Services:

- 4:00 p.m. Children and Family Worship – Sharing time-treasured music and story especially created for the whole family.
- 4:45 p.m. Live Nativity in the Courtyard – Angels, Shepherds, Wisemen and a stable filled with the friendly beasts of Christmas.
- 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve in Candlelight – The Joy of Christmas celebrated with rich hymns and reverent music of the day as we tell the great story of God’s Greater Love for the whole world. Joy to the World!

**Plan now to celebrate the Advent Season and Christmas
with family and friends at Ortega Church!**



**Connecting to Our Community,
Growing in Christ, Serving the World.**

Ortega Church Mission Statement



PASTOR'S POST

Our Staff:

Rev. Art McClellan

Pastor
artmcclellan@ortegachurch.org

Winslow Colbert

Administrative/Financial Coordinator
winslow@ortegachurch.org

Ellie Marchman

Administrative/Financial Coordinator
ellie@ortegachurch.org

Susan Norville

Director of Connect Ministries
Susan@ortegachurch.org

Audra Bancroft

Director of Children's Ministry
audra@ortegachurch.org

Kirby Tyler

Director of Youth Ministry
Kirby@ortegachurch.org

Melissa Millican

Director of Recreation Ministries
Melissa@ortegachurch.org

Nora Cash

Director of Communications
Nora@ortegachurch.org

Scott Coleman

Director of Contemporary Music
scott@ortegachurch.org

Charlie Mann

Organist/Pianist
charlie@ortegachurch.org

Gayle Runion

Director Ortega Playschool
ortegaplayschool@gmail.com

Kelly Stone

Assistant Director Ortega Playschool
ortegaplayschool@gmail.com

Jonathan Jennings

Audio Visual
jonj@ortegachurch.org

Wyatt Cleland

Maintenance Coordinator

Cheree Swint

Hospitality/Housekeeping

con-gre-ga-tion

Congregation (noun): a group of Christian believers gathered in a particular place for worship and encouragement in the practice of the Christian faith.

Through our 2022 Stewardship Campaign focus, we are defining and celebrating the term "Congregation" and what it means to us individually and as a community of faith to be part of the Ortega Church congregation. We've asked what the meaning of congregation should be... and what it could be for Ortega Church and our church's future.

The last two years have been challenging times for many people and for Christ's church. In our recent morning worship we've shared Scripture from Isaiah 61, which tells of a time when God's people are captured, imprisoned, exiled, poor in spirit, and in great need of uplifting and healing in their desperate times. We are asked how has the last year affected you – captured you, imprisoned you, impacted your sleep, your peace, your spirit? What is breaking your heart?

The promises of God are shared in Isaiah 61 and in the Gospel of Luke as Jesus begins his earthly ministry with the same words: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news. The Lord has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released. The Lord has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favor has come. To all who mourn, the Lord will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the Lord has planted for his own glory. They will rebuild the ancient ruins, repairing cities destroyed long ago. They will revive them, though they have been deserted for generations.*
– Isaiah 61 (selections)



"They will be like great oaks!"

The oak tree is a powerful image symbolizing strength, endurance, eternity, honor, hospitality, faith – all combined, it creates a strong reflection of the Christian faith. The symbolic meaning of an acorn ... one little acorn? With time, one acorn can be the beginning of a forest of mighty oak trees. Acorns represent the power of hopefulness and spiritual growth.

My friend Nola shares a story of planting oak trees with her grandmother. She asked, "How long will it take for the trees to grow" and was surprised by the answer of so many years. She asked her grandmother, "Why are you planting trees you will not live to see come to full growth?" Her grandmother answered: I'm not planting them for me. I'm planting them for generations to come.

You may feel like an acorn today. God is calling us to be an oak. Christ calls the church to be like a great oak – to rebuild, repair, revive, restore, renew. God calls us to be an oak and to bring the Lord's favor. What is the Lord's favor? Grace. Power. Healing. The Lord has anointed **us** to bring good news. The Lord sends **us** to comfort the brokenhearted, to proclaim captives released!

The intention of our Con-gre-ga-tion Stewardship invitation: "They will restore. They will revive. They will renew." Who is "**they**?" God calls **us** to be oaks. Reviving our church. Restoring our community. Let us first renew ourselves for God's glory...and then let us work together as the congregation for the renewal of Christ's Church – Ortega Church.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Art", written in a cursive style.

How Can We Pray For You?

You may request prayer by calling the office, 389-5556 x118, sending an email to ellie@ortegachurch.org, or completing the prayer request form at www.ortegachurch.org. Would you like to join the prayer team to receive prayer requests via email? Contact ellie@ortegachurch.org.

FINANCES

Year-to-date

October 31, 2021 Finances

Revenue and Expenses

Actual Revenue:
\$754,983.81

Actual Expenses:
\$674,426.57

Thank you for your financial support of the ministries of Ortega Church!

con·gre·ga·tion

Congregation(noun): a group of Christian believers gathered in a particular place for worship and encouragement in the practice of the Christian faith.

Thank you to everyone who has already returned your 2022 Pledge Card!

Pledges to underwrite the ministries of Ortega Church in 2022 can be made by contacting the Church Administrator, Ellie Marchman at 904.389.5556, ext 118, or online at www.ortegachurch.org.

Thank You!

*Call or email Ellie Marchman with questions or concerns
389-5556 x118 or financeoffice@ortegachurch.org.*

ORTEGA LIFE CENTER



PICKLEBALL



TOURNAMENT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10TH.
ORTEGA LIFE CENTER

BLIND DRAW TOURNAMENT

WARMUPS 6:00 P.M.
TOURNEY BEGINS 6:30 P.M.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT
www.ortegasports.com

Giftcards for winners:
\$20 - 1st place
\$5 - 2nd place

\$5 PER PERSON ENTRY



Chair Yoga

Tuesdays, 9am - Chair yoga is for all people including beginners, older adults and individuals with chronic conditions. We will offer a variety of seated and standing poses designed to increase flexibility, balance and range of movement. You will also practice breathing and relaxation exercise to reduce stress while always being aware of your pain-free range of motion and following physician directives.

Looking forward to seeing each of you as we begin a journey of learning, health and fellowship. Sign up online at ortegasports.com.

ADULT MINISTRIES

Connect | Grow | Serve



Connect with Ortega Church each week through our two expressions of Sunday Worship - 9:30am Modern and 11:00am Traditional. Both Services offer LIVE In-Person or Online worship opportunities. You can also join many in our church family who share our daily readings from the Upper Room devotional, available in the Narthex or Church Office.



Susan Norville
Director of Connect Ministries
susan@ortegachurch.org



Growing in your faith is encouraged through Ortega Church Small Group Ministries. Several small group opportunities are offered on the church campus with safety precautions in place.

Current class offerings include:

Open Door Class (Room 4 -Education Buildings); Sundays at 9:45am

Renovate Class (Parlor); Sundays at 10:45am

Bible Believers (Virtual gathering via Zoom); Sundays at 10:00am

Rediscovery Class (Parlor) Wednesday's at 6 pm; zoom option available

Women's Bible Study (Fellowship Hall) Mondays at 1:00 pm;
(Parlor) Tuesdays at 5:30pm

Thursday Morning Men's Group (Parlor) 6:45am

Wednesday Evening Men's Bible Study- (Room 4) 7:00pm

Prayer Ministry Team (Room 3) Thursdays 10:00am, Biweekly

2022 ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar Flower Calendar
is in the Narthex.

Reserve your
Special Sunday.

The cost is \$90.

rightnow MEDIA

Our Ortega staff are always looking for ways to help develop and strengthen your faith. We believe RightNow Media is a great faith-building tool for use at home, work, or to share in your neighborhood. There are teaching videos for everyone- children, youth, parents, married couples, college students, single adults, working professionals- all aimed at helping you grow in your faith! It's like the "Netflix of Bible Studies" with a HUGE library of faith based-videos on demand- on your phone, iPad, computer, or at home on your TV. All you need is internet access. If you have not activated your free account, we can help you. Call Susan at 904-389-5556 or email susan@ortegaumc.org and we will get you connected.



Surviving the Holidays Grief Share

When you are grieving a loved one's death, the holiday season can be especially painful. Please join us for this encouraging seminar on **December 5, 2021 from 2-4PM**. Register Online at www.ortegachurch.org. For more information call Winslow Colbert at 904-389-5556.

- How to deal with the many emotions you'll face
- What to do about traditions and other coming changes
- Helpful tips for surviving social events
- How to discover hope for your future

www.griefshare.org/holidays

ADULT MINISTRIES

Retirees on the GO!

Outings

Retirees on the GO! provides outings and service opportunities for seniors and retirees, as well as fun and exciting fellowship. The next outing is Tuesday, December 14 at 11 at the Orange Park Fish House, 636 Kingsley Avenue. RSVP by December 13.

To be placed on the mailing list, contact:
Susan Norville | (904) 359-5556 x113

Drop N Shop

December 20, 10:00AM-2:00PM- Enjoy a Mom's morning out. \$10.00 per family.

United Methodist Women

The United Methodist Women Board will meet Tuesday, December 7 at 10am in the parlor.

The Lydia Circle will be hosting a combined circle meeting on **Monday, December 13 at 11am** in the Chapel. Gifts will be given to five local missions - Ortega Playschool, Family Promise, Methodist Children's Village, The Inn, and Inspire to Rise. Shannon Jennings will give a special Christmas devotional and Barry Willis will inspire us on the piano with Christmas music. A catered lunch will follow in Fellowship Hall. Rethreaded will be selling their homemade items and will accept cash, checks, or credit cards.

Please RSVP to Sally Tate (mustangsally310@gmail.com or text to 404-771-3748) by December 6 if you plan to attend.

MISSIONS AND OUTREACH



SERVE

Save the date for these upcoming outreach opportunities.

December Missions Project Methodist Children's Village

In the past Ortega Church has collected groceries to support the families and staff at MCV to help offset costs of the holiday season. During the Pandemic, we are going to make it even easier! We will be collecting monetary gifts to share Walmart gift cards with each family and staff member at the Village. Simply send the amount you would like to contribute to Ortega Church and designate for MCV holiday gift card. We will purchase the Walmart gift cards and deliver them to the Village from our church family. Our goal is to share a gift card with all 60 families in this Christmas season. Donate at ortegachurch.org.

Hanging of the Greens

December 3, 9am - 12pm – Volunteers will enjoy the festive work and great company as the Sanctuary is transformed with wreaths, boughs and bows. Join us - there is special, creative work for everyone! Nursery available upon request.

Young Parents Dinner

Sunday, December 5, 5pm – Join us for a time of fellowship and food. Hosted at the home of Rebecca and Josh Sale, 4172 Venetia Blvd. You are always welcome to these special gatherings and we truly hope to see you there!

Community Health Outreach

Saturday, December 4, 8am - 12pm – Join Ortega Church as we serve at the Community Health Outreach Campus – 5126 Timuquana Road. Volunteers will be serving in the Food Pantry and assisting in sorting clothing, diapers and equipment for

their Baby Luv Outreach Ministry that assists parents of young children with these essential baby products.

Crew 56 Christmas Party

Friday, December 10, 5:30pm - 8:00pm – 5th & 6th graders are welcome to join us for this Christmas party with an evening of food and fun, hosted by the Ortega Kids Ministry. Contact Audra@ortegachurch.org for more information.

Youth Late Night Game Night

Friday, December 17, 7:00pm - 12:00am in the Fellowship Hall
It's the perfect time to celebrate winter break with a Late Night Game Night! We'll stay up late, play games, eat too much food, laugh at jokes that aren't funny and have a blast! Invite your friends and join us at church for this half-nighter! Cost is \$10.00. Contact Kirby@ortegachurch.org for more information.

Christmas Eve Services

December 24, 4:00PM – Join us for Children's and Family Worship in the Sanctuary. From **4:15pm-5:15pm** we will have a Live Nativity in the Courtyard. At **5:30pm** you are invited to enjoy our Christmas Eve in Candlelight service.

Family Promise

January 9-16, Family Promise families will be on campus. Sign up online to volunteer at ortegachurch.org.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



WHAT'S UP

SUNDAY MORNING NURSERY
6 weeks - 4 years (Prek3)
9:30-12:00



DECEMBER 5 | 10:45AM

SUNDAY MORNING
Prek4 - 6th grade
9:30 Sanctuary
10:30 Pick up Education Building

Jingle Jam

Join us for this festive event that the whole family can enjoy. We will have fun games, crafts and singing, immediately following the 9:30 service, in the Fellowship Hall. Come celebrate with us!

Save the Date:

12/10 Crew 56 Christmas
Caroling Party 5:30pm-8:00pm
12/20 Moms Morning Out 10:00am-2:00pm
12/24 Christmas Eve Family Service 4pm
followed by Live Nativity 4:45pm



WEDNESDAY- MID WEEK
Crew 56
6:30-8:00 Education Building

YOUTH GROUP



Join us for our Annual Youth

**CHRISTMAS
PARTY**

Wednesday, December 15th 6-8 PM

**DECEMBER
@ ORTEGA YOUTH**

December 1: Youth Group
December 5/6: Life Groups
December 8: Youth Group
December 12/13: Jingle Jam
December 15: Youth
Christmas Party
December 17: Late Night
Game Night
December 25: Merry
Christmas!

SAVE THE DATE

Youth Group returns after the
holidays on January 12th!

WINTER RETREAT



FEBRUARY 18-21, 2022 | LOOK UP LODGE
SIGN UP ONLINE NOW!

Ortega United Methodist Church Endowment Fund

END YOUR YEAR ON A GENEROUS NOTE BY MAKING A GIFT TO THE ORTEGA CHURCH PERMANENT ENDOWMENT FUND



Ortega United Methodist Church
ENDOWMENT FUND

Make a difference today in one of three ways:

Write a check. Your gift is tax deductible up to 100% of your Adjusted Gross Income, if you itemize. In some cases your charitable donations will enable you to itemize.

Donate stocks, mutual funds or real estate. If the current market value of these assets is in excess of your cost and you have owned them for more than a year, you save in two ways: First, you receive an income tax deduction for the market value of the property donated. Second, you don't pay income tax on the capital gain, further reducing the out of pocket cost of your gift.

Make a direct distribution from your IRA. If you are 70 1/2 or older, the direct distribution of up to \$100,000 is excluded from your total income so you pay no income tax on the distribution. It also counts toward your Required Minimum Annual Distribution.

Make a difference in the future. A gift from your will or living trust, known as a bequest, is a simple and straight forward way to make a financial gift to your Church.

It provides flexibility. A bequest lets you balance your gift to the Church with your concerns about living expenses, future medical costs, and loved ones. Because you are not giving your assets away today, you don't need to worry about what might happen if you need those assets in the future. A bequest in your will can be changed at any time prior to your death.

It lets you be sensible on your commitment. It's impossible to predict the value of your estate down the road but a bequest of a tithe or other percentage insures that you can benefit the Church's Endowment and your loved ones in relative proportion.

For more information, contact Church Administrator, Ellie Marchman, at 904-389-5556 ext. 118 or e-mail financeoffice@ortegachurch.org.

"Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, as long as you can."

John Wesley

This information is not intended as legal or tax advice.
You should contact your attorney or tax advisor before making any decisions.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

December 1

Cecilia Bryant
Diane Hays
Samantha Thivierge

December 2

Jennifer Dickson
Kevin Hastings
Ashley Helmick

December 3

Lin Rainey

December 4

Rebecca Bliss
Stewart Ira
Downing Nightingale, IV
Mary Virginia Terry

December 5

Craig Jones
Bree Roberts
Caroline Steedley

December 6

Johanna Willingham

December 7

Rob Marett

December 8

Greg Norman

December 9

Elizabeth Smithwick

December 10

Vic Mason

December 11

Elinor Davidson
Emma Cate Hurd
Bill Inman
Trip Keefe

December 12

Cynthia Kauppila
Catie Steedley

December 14

Vann Farnell

December 15

Kathy Nipper
Ben Seay

December 17

Clark Jones
Baxley Koziol
Emily Wheldon

December 18

Chuck Newman
Jason Purdy
Eleanor Grace Tucker

December 19

Karen Harp
Andria York

December 20

Steve Armstrong

December 21

Nora Anderson
Emma Armstrong
Pat Sasser

December 22

Riley Burke
Ben Jolley
Robert Lamounette
Will Montgomery

December 23

Sam Middlekauff
Lucretia Norman
Garnet Shepherd

December 24

Cissy Chapman
Susan Miller

December 25

Shawn Bliss
Laurence Lee

December 26

Kyle Christy
Carol Jones

December 27

Diana Hupp
Caitlyn Risley
Marie Wells

December 28

Gail Atchley
Matt Bliss
Scooter Cavins
Carolyn Groff
Eve Mahoney
Ben Oates

December 29

Wyatt Coleman
Debbie Saunders
Kevin Smith

December 30

Julie Martin

December 31

Sheri Cheek
Fran Geischen
James Sale

Please pray for these members on their birthdays. This is an excellent way we can remember our entire congregation in prayer throughout the year. Please let the office know if we have omitted you or someone you know!



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

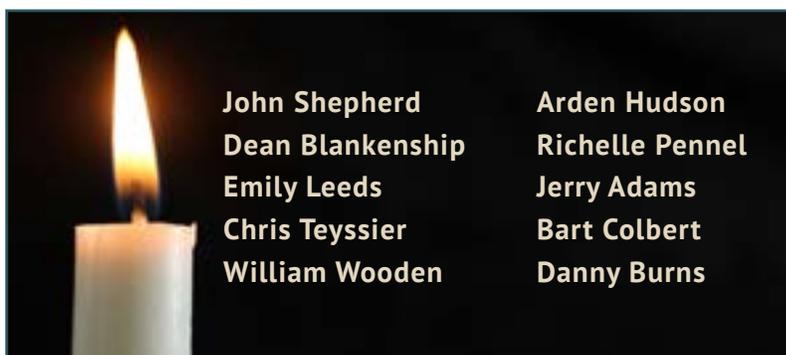
Celebrating Winslow Colbert

Winslow's retirement was celebrated on Sunday, November 14 for her sixteen years of ministry with, for, and to the congregation of Ortega Church.



All Saints Sunday

On November 7, the following Ortega Church family members who passed in the previous year were recognized by name and with candlelighting:



DECEMBER 2021



NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Jacksonville, FL
PERMIT NO.
1928

4807 Roosevelt Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32210

Ph: 904-389-5556
Playschool: 904-387-0749

Email: spirenews@ortegachurch.org
www.ortegachurch.org

Name: _____ Phone/email: _____
(As you want it to appear in the Christmas Eve publications * PLEASE PRINT)

In Memory of:

In Honor of:



of plants ordered _____ @ \$9.00/each = \$ _____

Please enclose payment with order form. Checks should be made to:
Ortega UMC, 4807 Roosevelt Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32210.
You may also pay on our website, www.ortegachurch.org,
"Online Giving" and choose the Poinsettias designation.

Deadline for order placement: Dec. 21, 2021
You may take your poinsettia after the 5:30pm service on December 24th.