

THE VOICE of *Second Church*

United Church of Christ

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December 2021



FAMILY FELLOWSHIP **LA SALETTE SHRINE** **LIGHTS & TREATS** **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 5:00 PM**

Second Congregational Church of Attleboro, UCC
Reverend Dr, Wayne E. Earl, Interim Minister....pastorwayneearl@gmail.com
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THE VOICE

We warmly welcome everyone to celebrate God’s love by joining in dynamic worship, creating genuine community, and serving all with justice and respect.

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

December, 2021

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MINISTER’S MESSAGE

“But just at the right time, God sent God’s Son, born through a woman ...so that we could become God’s children.” -Galatians 4:4-5

The Season of Advent is now among us and it is certainly a favorite time of year for many people, maybe even the favorite time! The colors, sounds, fragrances, gift-giving and receiving, happy gatherings and especially the themes of hopeful anticipation, meaningful preparation, the promotion of peace, the pronouncement of an everlasting joy for all people, a divine welcome and love in human form extended to all, and the eternal mystery of God among us -all themes that remind us that, in the end, we really will be okay, that all will be well.

Of course, pain and grief do not go away and this ‘wonderful time of year’ can, and often does, bring acute reminders that everything is not quite as we’d hoped, that all is, indeed, not well. Still, in the midst of whatever heartbreak or despair we endure, Jesus arrives at

just the right time, even if the deliverance we receive may feel insufficient. Emmanuel, God with us, the light of the world blazing in us, moving through us, granting us peace in absence, joy in our mourning, all hope-filled realities and messages that are definitely worth celebrating and sharing!

As most of you know this season also brings to you the gift of a new settled pastor, who arrives in January! My prayer is that you will extend the same gracious welcome to him that you gave to me when I landed among you 22 months ago, just as this awful pandemic began. I have no doubt you will, for after all, you are a generous people, overflowing with a sincere devotion to God and one another all year long, in both the good seasons and bad. Just at the right time I got to love you, and how blessed I have been to receive your warm embrace. I will miss you.

With affection, Pastor Wayne



Music Notes

On Thanksgiving Sunday, as I passed back through the sanctuary after coffee hour, here's what I saw: the younger contingent of the Intergenerational Liturgical Dancers, coached by Diane Osborne, rehearsing for the Hanging of the Greens. A veritable tableau of happiness and hopefulness!

It's more special this year because it didn't happen last year. That's the way I feel about this season's choral and bell music too. Anything and everything we could possibly perform has not been sung or played for at least two years. There's extra joy when the music makes its way from file cabinets to folders.

Slowly, tentatively, we seek to return to some sort of normality. The choirs are gathering again, as of September. The last couple of Sundays the Adult Choir has moved from balcony to chancel, albeit still masked. We keep our fingers crossed that there can be a congregation in the sanctuary, singing carols and lighting candles, on Christmas Eve. Just watching the kids practicing, with the greens on their shoulders, helped me keep that hope alive!

Choir Schedules

The Bell Choir and Adult Choir will rehearse, at their regular times, on December 2, 9, and 16, and possibly on December 23, if we need it (stay tuned for a decision about that date).

As with so many other things this fall – as we try to “normalize” but remain somewhat “ad hoc”– we will make decisions in December about repertoire and performance dates. Bell Choir should pencil-in Christmas Eve (I've heard from Ralph G. that this happens on December 24th this year!). I'll decide on choral music when I have a sense of who will be available to sing.



Bill MacPherson, Music Director

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The Stewardship campaign for 2022 has received pledges totaling \$95,100 or 70 percent of its goal of \$135,000 as of Monday, November 22. The Stewardship Committee thanks parishioners and friends who have already made a commitment for next year.

If you have not made a pledge or commitment for next year, please consider increasing it to help meet the challenges of a new settled pastor and his goals for us. If you have misplaced your pledge card, let your committee contact or the church office know and another one will be mailed to you.

In addition, please continue to keep your financial commitment for this year up to date. The committee thanks all who have faithfully made regular gifts throughout the year.

*Yours in Christian service,
The Stewardship Committee*

Poinsettia Time

We will once again be putting poinsettias from Evergreen Nursery on the altar this year. This will be our 3rd year with Evergreen, where they grow their own beautiful plants. This year, poinsettias will cost \$15.50 for red plants. Please place your order before Sunday, December 12th and send it with your dedication to ralphgiannetti@yahoo.com or the office and send your payment to the church office. Please be sure to indicate the number of plants ordered and write Poinsettias on the memo line. As always, donations may also be made to the Food Pantry.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In the months of October and November the Sunday School prepared and executed a secret mission of sharing God's Love and Compassion. Next time you're in a pew, look out for special bookmarks hidden in the bibles and hymnals that you're welcome to take home to use with a favorite book or leave in the pew as a hymn or scripture marker to spread joy over and over. Also, at Coffee Hour, please check out our ever-growing Compassion Journey mural in Fellowship Hall, including a new gratitude chain that we added for Thanksgiving to highlight all the things, people, and experiences we are thankful for this year!

Our next Family Fellowship is Lights at La Salette, Sunday, December 12th at 5:00 pm, rain date Sunday December 19th. All are welcome to join us and bring friends and family! As we will be outside masks will be optional. We will meet by the pond side to share the wonder of the lights with treats to follow. If you have any questions or are trying to find our group that evening, please feel free to call/text (508) 409-7919. It can be busy so please feel free to arrive early and see that magical moment at 5 when all the lights turn on!

For the first Sunday of the month, December 5th, we will have a Gathering Sunday and Communion. For the Sundays during school vacation, December 26th and January 2nd we will also have Gathering Sundays. Sunday School will meet with the following precautions on December 12th and 19th: all participants and volunteers will be masked, we will hold class in Fellowship Hall, and we ask that any participants feeling unwell stay home that week. Children ages 2-4 may be dropped off beginning at 9:45 in the Nursery Room for the new Sunday School for Littles program including activities such as story, song, and craft time. **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** If you would like to sign up to volunteer for a week in the Littles class, please check in with the office if you are not already CORIED – it's a quick form and background check, then you can sign up for a week on the calendar posted in the Nursery. (The Littles are so fun!) Students in Kindergarten and up are welcome to sit with their families for

the first part of worship and will join their teachers in the narthex when noted in the bulletin. If you prefer to continue worshipping virtually or need to miss a Sunday for any reason, we will gladly provide materials for faith formation at home upon request. If you know of a new family that would like to explore faith and seek compassionate justice, please feel free to invite them to join us anytime.

Sunday December 12th

The Light of the Whole World

The story of the shepherds, from Luke 2 as told in 'The Jesus Storybook Bible' "That same night, in amongst the other stars, suddenly a bright new star appeared...God put it there when his baby Son was born – to be like a spotlight. Shining on him. Lighting up the darkness. Showing people the way to him." Today children will make their own special star to bring home to share the Light and Love of God with their families.

Sunday December 19th

The King of All Kings

The story of the three Wise Men, from Matthew 2 as told in 'The Jesus Storybook Bible' "They had been waiting for this star. They knew it would come... At dawn, they packed their camels and wrapped gifts for the baby." Today children will make two special gifts, one to take home for someone special and one that they will prepare together to deliver to the staff of a local community organization that they choose. If you would like to donate to their gift to thank the community, we would gladly welcome items such as small bottles of hand-sanitizer, individual packs of tissue, store bought snacks, and \$5 and \$10 gift cards for a coffee place.

If you have any questions, ideas, or would like to volunteer please feel to reach out to me.

Diane Osborne

Chair, Christian Education Committee

de_saunders@hotmail.com

(508) 409-7919

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

The Food Pantry will continue to be "open for business"; tentatively December 20th will be the next date prior to Christmas. The volunteers distributed 13 bags of assorted products to families in November in addition to a

table of Thanksgiving extras. Thank you for your generous donations of money and supplies. Spaghetti sauce, cereals, real fruit juices, canned fruit, baked beans, tuna, spam, peanut butter, hearty soups, corned beef hash, detergents, toiletries, household cleaning supplies, and female hygiene products are always welcome. The drop-off site is in the church office, Narthex, or kitchen.

Contact: Betsey Pray with any questions, rlpbpp@verizon.net.

The Food 'n Friends Family Café is closed for the time being. It is tentatively scheduled to reopen on Wednesday, January 12, 2022. Contact Linda Wiswall with any questions, wiswalllinda@gmail.com.

Please watch for fall sales for our Giving Tree. We will be collecting warm blankets and bath towels for the Attleboro Area Interfaith Collaborative from Sunday, December 5th – January 9th in the Narthex.

We are looking for members to join our Outreach and Missions Committee, we would love to have you, no experience necessary! The more the merrier! Please contact Derek Hall (- derekh339@gmail.com, Jen Turcotte – jenny_turcotte@yahoo.com, or Paula Foresman - paulaforesman@gmail.com) with any questions or interest in joining us.

Women's Fellowship

HOLIDAY FAIR

Our fair was wonderful; thank you for trying something new. We made about \$4,500! Thanks to all who donated their time, talent and items to make this day of fellowship a great benefit to the General fund, Outreach and Missions, and projects we undertake and contribute to the betterment of our church home.

Coffee Hour has began again; please come have a cup of coffee, tea or hot chocolate with us. Please let Sandy or the office know if you can help some Sunday.

The Yard Sale will be happening in the spring, so whatever items you put aside for Grandma's attic or Grandpa's garage will be really

appreciated. These departments will be in the yard sale. You may leave items on the back steps. Any questions, please ask Sandy or Fred. Thank you for your donations.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We hope to see you all soon.

*Women's Fellowship
Executive Committee*

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

PSM will meet on Monday, Dec. 20th at 2:00 in the Parlor. Shawls are a tremendous comfort to individuals experiencing a loss or other traumatic event in their lives. New members are always welcome. Contact me if you have any questions. *Roberta Ferguson*



It is hard to believe that we are in the final month of 2021! Jack and Jill staff and students have been learning and laughing in the classrooms, the hallways and on the playground! Literacy month successfully wrapped up at the end of November. We have had so many balloons returned already! It warms my heart to see that reading at home is a passion for all of our families.

This December we are partnering with Christmas Is For Kids to adopt 8 children in need during the holiday season. Our Angel Wreaths were hung outside of each classroom with 2 children adopted per class. Families took tags and purchased items. I felt that this year especially it was so important to give back. The staff at Jack and Jill also adopted a teenager in need. Seeing the children get excited to take a tag home and knowing that they are helping someone is one of the best things to see. ☺ It does feel good to know that our school community is helping to make someone's holiday a little brighter!

Our classrooms continue to be bustling with energy each day! The children continue to enjoy the many experiences

their teachers provide for them! Children will be working on special "surprises" for their families. Our schedule and routine will stay the same as we focus on the theme of family and love during the holiday season. We will be conferencing with our 3 year old families on December 9th & 10th.

Our Scrip gift card fundraiser is underway! Order forms are available via email or you can stop by the Narthex or church office for a printed copy. All orders are due by 9:00 am on Friday, December 10th.

Please mark your calendars now for our open house on Saturday, January 29th.

As we approach the end of 2021 I would be remiss if I did not thank the entire Jack and Jill community as well as the church community for their continued support!

*Wishing you peace and love
this holiday season, Katrina Lay
Executive Director*

Did You Know?

Our earliest forebears in this country - I'm referring specifically to the Pilgrims and more especially the Puritans - had no use for Christmas. The Pilgrims were too busy just trying to survive, and the Puritans viewed Christmas as just another day of drudge and gloom. In fact, a law passed by the Great and General Court in 1659 made it a crime to celebrate Christmas at all unless the day itself just happened to fall on a Sunday. A citizen could face a session in the stocks if any decorations were spotted in his home by the religious police of the time. It wasn't until the 1800's when many Irish and German immigrants were flooding on to our shores that this outdated law was finally removed from the books.

I have read that Martin Luther was credited with the idea of the first Christmas tree. Legend has it that as he was walking home on Christmas Eve, he happened to look up at the stars twinkling and was struck by God's beautiful works. When he got home he took some evergreen branches and candles and proceeded to create the first Christmas tree. The idea for Christmas trees in this country came from England. Prince Albert brought them

from his native Germany. Queen Victoria and their many children were delighted, and it didn't take the idea long to catch on.

We all know where the practice of gift giving originated; I sometimes wish that the three wise men had taken a wrong turn on their way to Bethlehem especially when stores start putting up Christmas displays in August.

Ted Moxham



December Birthdays

- 1 Chris Brown
Enoch Osborne
Mary Valentine
- 2 Brittney Cassidy
- 3 Phil Cotsalas
- 4 Lilliana Mernin
- 7 Zachary Withers
- 9 Max Lancaster
- 10 Carissa Johnstone
Brenda Wall
- 11 Julie Withers
- 15 Nate O'Connor
- 18 Nick Macomber
- 19 Becky Letendre
Calvin Turcotte
- 20 Brenda Alsfeld
Harold Goldzung
- 22 Janice Fitzpatrick
John Lepper
Alex Robinson
- 23 Caroline Griffin
Ed Hazen
Debbie Spatcher
- 24 Ruth Baker
Mariah Ramsay
Carolyn Werdin
- 25 Pete Cotsalas
- 26 Jayden Pine
Larry Valentine
- 28 Camryn Janson
Mike Touloumtzis
- 29 Ellie O'leary

D E C E M B E R 2 0 2 1

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Confirma- tion Class	2 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	3	4
5 Second Sunday of Advent Peace 10:00 AM Worship/Communion	6	7 10:00 AM Staff Meeting	8	9 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	10	11
12 Third Sunday of Advent Joy 10:00 AM Worship 11:15 AM Christian Education Committee Meeting 5:00 PM Family Fellowship Lights at La Salette	13	14	15 Confirma- tion Class	16 5:00 PM Board of Deacons Virtual Meeting 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	17	18
19 Fourth Sunday of Advent Love 10:00 AM Worship	20 Next Month's Voice Deadline 2:00 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry 3-5 PM Food Pantry Distribution 7:00 PM Facilities Committee Meeting	21 7:00 PM Administration Committee Meeting	22	23 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	24 Christmas Eve 6:00 PM Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day
26 10:00 AM Worship 11:15 AM Church Council Meeting	27	28	29	30	31	

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