

The Steeple



FROM OUR PASTOR

Even though I don't eat meat, I still love the smell of Thanksgiving – turkey roasting in the oven, vegetables steaming, squash in the crock pot, freshly baked pies sitting on the counter. How blessed we are for the food we shared and those who sat around the table with us and those that will never be forgotten.

Now, here we are looking at December barreling towards us. If it's anything like November, strap in and hold on because in a wink of an eye, January will be here. So let's consciously slow things down, take a moment to breathe and allow the themes of Advent to warm our hearts: hope, peace, joy, and love. Let's remember that it's not about the decorations, shopping, or baking, it's about looking back at the story of the birth of Christ – and forward to His second coming.

With a heartfelt thank you – I honor all the effort Donna, Steve, Martha, and her daughter Heather put into sorting through years and years of accumulated quag in Fellowship Hall. With the help of a great team from Alcoholics Anonymous, all the piles were loaded into their trucks and donated to Savers. Because of all their hard work, I'm excited that the administrative committees of Alcoholics Anonymous can now begin hosting their meetings in Fellowship Hall. I pray this partnership will open other opportunities in community outreach.

At the base of the stairs to the sanctuary, you'll notice once again our 'Giving Tree'. So far, it's been blessed with a donation of mittens and a scarf. In the spirit of giving and loving our neighbors as ourselves, let's fill every branch. May we never forget "...Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me..."

This is our church and I hope you help personalize it for Christmas. Do you have an ornament or a decoration that reminds you of a loved one? Bring it in and hang it on our tree or on a windowsill so that every time you are there, they will be there with you. What a tribute to those that will never be forgotten. And when the holidays are over, you can take it home once again. We are so blessed with such a beautiful sanctuary – let's make it OURS.

May grace and blessings be in your path,

Pastor Joe ...

FROM OUR LAY LEADER

The sky is falling! Ships are stuck offshore of California. Products are piling up in warehouses. There aren't enough truck drivers. Store shelves are empty. The news people tell us you won't get everything on your list. Christmas is in peril!

Really? Christmas is in peril because of our addiction to *'things'*?! Don't they know about the Grinch? He stole the trees, the gifts and the meal, but Christmas came anyway. In real life, we realize Christmas is a historical event. We may not know the exact date when Jesus was born, but it happened and nobody can take that from us. It is our own fault that Christmas has become a spending orgy and that we think there is no Christmas without a lavish display of gifts. And what is all this doing to our children?

When I look back on my childhood Christmases, gifts are not what I think of. What I remember is making cookies with my mother, with the heady fragrance of sugar, butter and cinnamon filling the house. The songs of the season were in the air, along with the hum of the sewing machine as Mom stitched gifts. Dad spent a lot of time in his shop and mysterious sounds emanated from that special place. The world wasn't open 24/7 back then and you had to make a special trip to see the Christmas lights and we all piled in the car to check them out.

I remember creeping downstairs early one Christmas morning and pausing before I went around the corner. I thought, "He was here just a little while ago, standing right in my house." I was filled with awe and wonder. The gifts waiting to be discovered took a back seat in that moment. I don't remember what any of them were, but I recall vividly how I felt as I considered the magic of Santa.



The wonders of Christmas are the atmosphere, the feelings, the season. Christmas should not be a one-day wonder, but a lifestyle. Yes, there are special things that happen during the season, but the love that Christmas brings should be in our hearts year-round.

The real gifts of Christmas are the sounds, sights and feelings, and you can find them at the special services at church. There will be singing, bell ringing, and candlelight. Friends, family and strangers will all share the love and hope that Christmas brings. All you need to do is show up, and I hope you do.

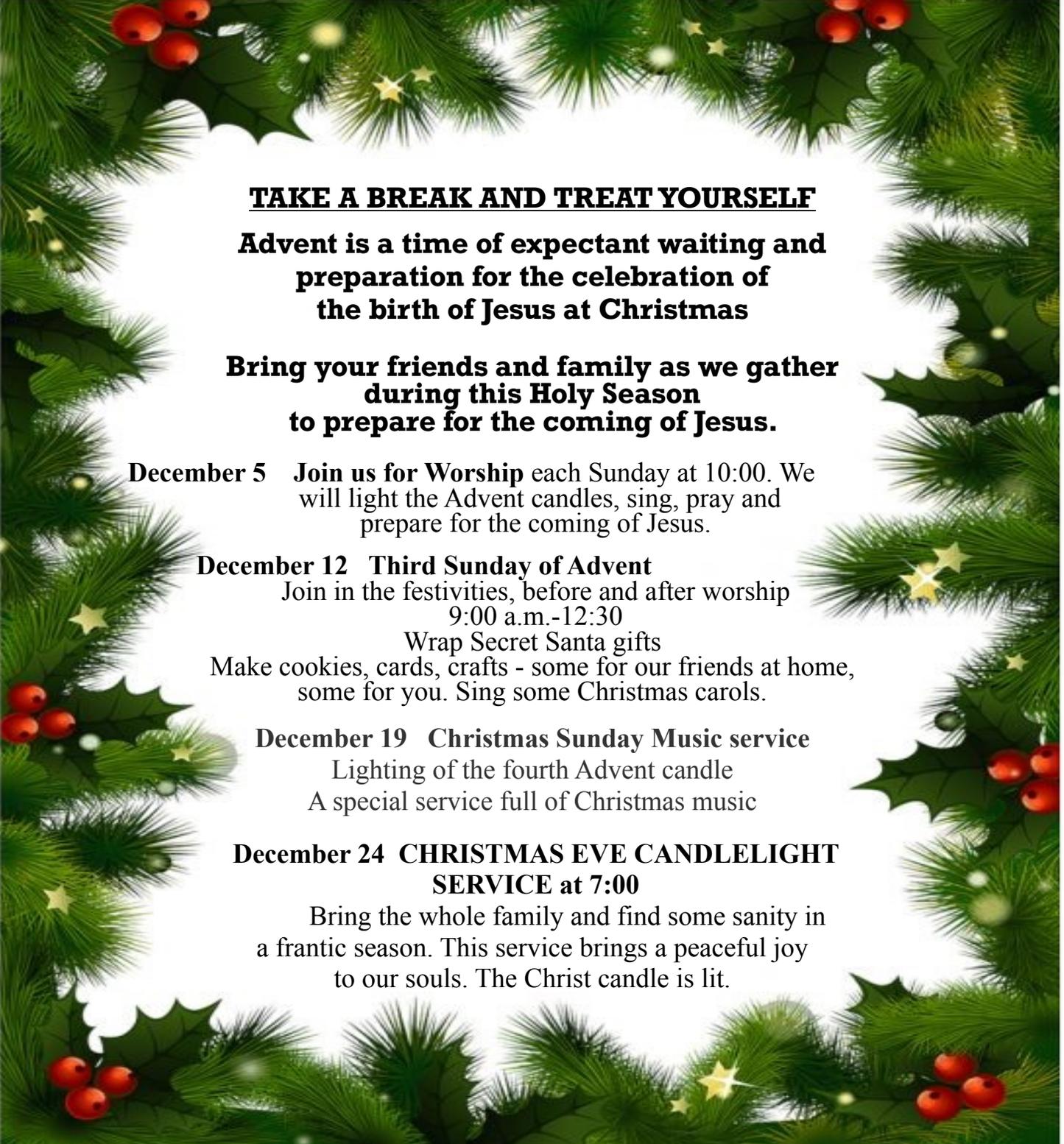
Merry Christmas!

Mary Lou

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

Make a donation to one of the mission projects of our church

- †Secret Santa
- †Casseroles for Kate's Kitchen
- †Food For Friends
- †White Christmas bags for shut-ins
- †Light the Steeple in honor of someone.
- †Neighbors Helping Neighbors Food Pantry



TAKE A BREAK AND TREAT YOURSELF

Advent is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas

Bring your friends and family as we gather during this Holy Season to prepare for the coming of Jesus.

December 5 Join us for **Worship** each Sunday at 10:00. We will light the Advent candles, sing, pray and prepare for the coming of Jesus.

December 12 Third Sunday of Advent
Join in the festivities, before and after worship
9:00 a.m.-12:30
Wrap Secret Santa gifts
Make cookies, cards, crafts - some for our friends at home, some for you. Sing some Christmas carols.

December 19 Christmas Sunday Music service
Lighting of the fourth Advent candle
A special service full of Christmas music

December 24 CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE at 7:00

Bring the whole family and find some sanity in a frantic season. This service brings a peaceful joy to our souls. The Christ candle is lit.

BE A SECRET SANTA

'Tis the time for the Secret Santa for Christmas program. We have children who will need gifts, and that means we need more people to shop.

You can help by:

Shopping for gifts - If you would like to shop, you can pick one or more children
Wrapping on Sunday, December 12 before and after worship

If you have question or would like to help, talk to Ann 413-695-1212.

If you know of a family who will go without gifts, give their information to Ann. Names and all information will be kept confidential. Catch the spirit of Christmas and become a Secret Santa.

WHITE
CHRISTMAS



As
is our
tradition,
the women
of the church
will prepare small
gift bags for our folks at
home. You are invited to
help make the cards, crafts and
cookies for the bags on December 12.
You are also invited to help deliver those
gifts, giving you a chance to visit with some
one who is unable to attend church in person. A
visit is a wonderful gift. If you will give the gift of
you, call ... or sign up on the sheet in the
sanctuary.

Share
The
Love

MARK YOU CALENDAR

- December 5: 11:15 a.m. Choir rehearsal
- December 8: 10:00 a.m. UM Women on zoom.
- December 9: 7:00 p.m. Choir rehearsal
- December 11: 1:00 p.m. Caroling with Kathy- meet at 80 Pine Grove Dr. SH
- December 12: 11:15 a.m. Christmas music rehearsal
-Before and after worship we will wrap Secret Santa gifts and make cards, a craft and cookies
- December 19: 10:00 a.m. Christmas music service
- December 24: 7:00 p.m. Christmas Candlelight service
- December 26: Casseroles for Kate's Kitchen are due.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS PLANTS ORDER FORM



We will be ordering our Christmas Poinsettia plants. Your cost is \$8.50 per plant. It is necessary that you enclose your payment with your order. To have the best selection of plants, your order must be in by Sunday, December 12th.

Kindly mail or give your order and payment to Ann (checks should be made out to The South Hadley Methodist Church), or drop it in the offering plate.

I wish the church to order _____ plants. Paid: _____

Given in memory/honor of _____

By/from/love (please circle): _____

I will pick up my plant after church _____ I wish it delivered to a shut-in _____

I will deliver it to: _____

*******FORMS DUE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12th*******

CELEBRATION, CONCERNS &



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

† Carol Brunelle, Harry Thomas, Beth Dietz, Pauline Kiakis, Samantha Snopek, Adele Reynolds, Doug & Dee Brooksbank, Dave Fanaras, Tim O'Donnell, Darlene Dout, Tom O'Dea, Bob & Viola Mortimer, Colleen Mortimer, Rev. Peter & Joanne Milloy, Pastor Joe, Bill Pead, Jessica Guarnera, Kay Washburn



STEEPLE LIGHTING

The Steeple is lit during the month of December:

†In honor of our family
by Alan & Ann Felsentreger

If you would like the steeple lit for one month, the fee is \$25.00.

THANK YOU MARTHA DUNN!

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the members of our church, I'd like to express our sincere thanks to Martha Dunn for all she has done as President of the Trustees. Having served in this role for 2.5 years, Martha will be stepping down as President in January, 2022. During this time, Martha had to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic and its nuances, such as: logistics of worship services being held outside, scheduling remote meetings, cleaning of the church keeping compliant with CDC and conference regulations to name a few. Martha has been a problem solver to physical building changes such as those needed for the new rear ramp, work on gutters, lighting, and general building maintenance. Too many projects to list. Again, Thank You Martha for your dedication, hard work and we will miss your leadership.

Ron Motyka



NO BAKE-BAKE SALE - THANK YOU

Thank you for your generosity. The UM Women received \$120 from the 'no-bake-bake-sale'. The money will be used to support our missions.

- CELEBRATE DIVERSITY -

All are welcome - loved for who you are, exactly as you are.
Join us for worship or join in one of our missions.

United Methodist Church

Of

Holyoke, South Hadley & Granby

30 Carew Street

South Hadley, MA 01075

Worship Sunday 10:00 a.m. in our Sanctuary and on Zoom

Pastor Joe DeGrande 413 237-6823

Email: pastorjoe.Steeple.Falls@gmail.com

Church office: 413-532-0500



PRAYER Christmas Hope

Father, I pray that you will turn our hearts toward you as Christmas approaches. Let us not get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season this year and miss the chance to celebrate the gifts of hope, peace, joy, love, that you sent to us on that first Christmas. That first Christmas, you gave us the gift of hope wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Thank you, Father, for your immeasurable gift. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

- [Stephanie Raquel](#)



SOUTH HADLEY METHODIST CHURCH

30 Carew Street

South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075-2705

Return address service requested.

