



The Steeple

January 2022



FROM OUR PASTOR

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night. I don't know about you, but the older I get, the more I'm ready for a good night's sleep after Christmas. And speaking of 'good nights', Christmas Eve Worship was absolutely moving! Heather blessed us with beautiful piano arrangements and the choir's voices filled our hearts. Mary Lou's decorations and placement of the paraments and flowers brought out the full beauty of our sanctuary – truly worthy of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you would also fall short without including all those who joined us either in person or on Zoom. Thank you all for creating such a cherished memory!

Another thank you for all your prayers and well wishes for my upcoming surgery on January 3rd. I think the nurses and medical staff will need them too. Johnny or no Johnny, the minute I see a needle or hear the words "IV" or "blood draw" – I'll be running down the hallway. I am grateful and pleased that Dot Lambert will be leading Worship on January 2nd. She is such an inspiring and passionate preacher.

As the New year unfolds, Jesus begins His ministry with John the Baptizer in the Jordan river. To commemorate the holy occasion of His baptism, on January 9th we will renew our Baptismal Vows together during Worship. I hope you will mark your calendars and join us in refreshing our covenant with God and with each other.



I need to close with a concern for the health and wellbeing of all. The rise of the new Omicron variant is alarming! I personally have seen more people become infected than I have with the Delta variant. What makes it more troubling is that the symptoms for those that have been vaccinated with the additional booster are relatively mild; bordering on asymptomatic. In other words, you don't even know you are sick AND contagious. PLEASE, the rapid tests are available at your local pharmacy – use them. We can no longer depend upon temperatures or severe respiratory signs as indicators that we may be contagious. We need to be tested regularly; if not for ourselves, for the person we may infect who may not survive the illness.

Beth and I wish you and your loved ones a New Year of health, love, and the opportunity to be the change we wish to see in the world. May we all be the 'star' others can follow to find Jesus.

May grace and blessings be in your path,
Pastor Joe ...

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS SHINES THROUGH YOU

Thank you to all who are helped to make this happen. You are amazing.

This year, 50 children received Christmas gifts thanks to your generosity. The response to the **Secret Santa** program is always amazing! People from our own church and our community came forward to help. Some shopped and wrapped gifts, and some helped organize the presents. In addition to the gifts, each of the 50 children received a hat and stocking stuffers and each family received a Big Y gift card.

The tree in the vestibules was covered with **Scarf, Hats & Mittens** and more under the tree. People showed their generosity by knitting and purchasing such a number of these warm accessories that it was not possible to keep count of all of them.

On December 12, people gathered in Fellowship Hall. We wrapped and sorted gifts for our Secret Santa program. Together we made cards, little Santa hat ornaments, and candy trains and put into gift bags to be delivered to our friends at home. Check out the photos.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA PLANTS



Thanks to you, the sanctuary was beautifully decorated for the Christmas worship service.

Plants were given:

In memory of All those that will never be forgotten,
With love by Joe & Beth

In honor of my children who help me in so many ways
With love Mom, Lois Felsentreger

In loving memory of Francis & Winifred Cerruti,
Love from Donna & Don Barre & Family

In memory of:
Betty & Jim Dout
Christopher Dout
Esther & Bob Asselin
From Alan & Darlene Dout

In loving memory of:
Robert & Helen Farman
Raymond R. Randall
Paul R. Randall
Raymond & Ruth Randall
By Bonnie Randall



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

January 12: 10.00 a..m. UM Women on zoom.
January 17: Bag the Community Event
January 18: 6:30 p.m. Church Council & Trustee meeting
January 21: 5:00-6:00 p.m. Grab & Go Supper
January 30: Casseroles for Kate's Kitchen due



In memory of Loved Ones
With love the Motyka Family

In loving memory of our parents, Dennis & Mary Louise Stark, John Felsentreger
From Alan & Ann Felsentreger

In loving memory of our sister and brother Winifred & Fran Cerutti
Ken & Toni Stark
By Pauline Kiakis Family & Ann Felsentreger Family

~The wreaths on the doors are in memory of my husband, John Felsentreger and loved ones, by Lois Felsentreger and in honor and memory of our parents, Dennis & Mary Louise Stark and John & Lois Felsentreger, by Alan and Ann Felsentreger.

CELEBRATION, CONCERNS & MORE



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, Rev. Peter & Joanne Milloy,
Pastor Joe, Bill Pead, Jessica Guarnera,
Kay Washburn

STEEPLE LIGHTING

If you would like the steeple lit for one month, the fee is \$25.00. The deadline is the 25th of the month. More than one person/family may participate.



PRAYER For Strength and God's Presence

Lord, At the start of each day, help us to recognize you above all else. Enlighten the eyes of our hearts that we might see you and notice how you're at work through our lives. Give us wisdom to make the best choices, fill us with a desire to seek after you more than anything else in this world. Let your Spirit and power breathe in us, through us, again, fresh and new. Thank you that you are greater than anything we may face in our day. Thank you that your presence goes with us and that your joy is never dependent on our circumstances, but it is our true and lasting strength, no matter what we're up against. We ask that your peace lead us, that it would guard our hearts and minds in you. We ask for your grace to cover our lives this day. We love you Lord...we need you.



PEOPLE ARE HUNGRY: CASSEROLES FOR KATE'S KITCHEN

Who: Will **you** join us by making a casserole for Kate's Kitchen

When: Once a month or whenever you can? This month's casseroles are **due January 30th**.

What: Cook one pound of some sort of pasta, add pasta sauce, add ground meat or turkey, and maybe cheese.

How: The UMW provides a pan and asks that the casseroles be frozen and then put in a plastic bag. You can bring it to church any time during the month and put it in the freezer.

Why: To do the work of God by helping feed hungry people.

Thank you for any help you can give towards this mission project. The casseroles are much appreciated. Eleven casseroles were delivered in December. If you have any questions call Ann 695-1212 or email the church office.

FROM OUR LAY LEADER

Are you one of those who are glad Christmas is over? That is an interesting mindset and I want to think about it. What we have done to Christmas and to ourselves is pretty sad. It has become a mad rush to spend money we don't necessarily have, on gifts for those we love and some because we "have to". On top of that, many feel pressure to create a "perfect" Christmas, whatever that is. Since the season apparently begins right after Halloween, shouldn't we be able to accomplish these goals by the time Christmas actually arrives? No wonder we are glad to see it go. We have spent money, time and energy, only to see the results come and go in one day. It's rather like a wedding, poof! It's gone. Back to normalcy.



Really? What about Christmas should be packed away for a year? The ornaments and decorations? For sure. Did you bake cookies? You can still do that. Your friends and family appreciate it when you show love through baking. Did you do something especially kind for anyone? It's fine to continue. Were you able to find some joy in the season? I am willing to bet it came from the good feeling that comes from making others happy.

Setting aside Advent and Epiphany, December 25 can be the beginning of the season and not the end. We can let the good feelings most of us are able to experience settle into our hearts so we can remember how it feels when we make others happy. It doesn't have to be December to do special things, in fact it's easier without the self-imposed pressures of Christmas.

Christmas ought to be a state of mind, a way of life. It can be our personal ministry. Instead of providing food for Thanksgiving and Christmas, we can remember that people need to eat all the other days of the year. They also need clothing all through the year. We all need kindness and thoughtfulness all the time.

So, instead of rejoicing that the season is over, rejoice that Jesus came to us and remember that he gave the simple request to "... Feed my sheep" in all ways. Pack away the outward trappings of Christmas and let the love show the rest of the year.

May 2022 bring you peace and many blessings.

Mary Lou



All are welcome to join us on January 12 at 10:00 a.m. We gather on zoom, plan our missions, support each other, share a devotion, pray. For a few more meetings we will continue sharing a F.R.O.G. - Fully Reply On God - devotion.

LATOYA MONIQUE 2012
"IN *Happy* MOMENTS,
PRAISE GOD.
IN DIFFICULT MOMENTS,
SEEK *God.*
IN QUIET MOMENTS,
trust GOD.
IN EVERY MOMENT,
THANK *God.*"

- 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



Love. Grow. Serve.

e-mail: churchoffice@thesteepelinthefalls.org

web site: www.thesteepelinthefalls.org

Dr. Heather Reichgott, Minister of Music

Ann Felsentreger, Secretary

Neighbors Helping Neighbors: 413-437-7593



SOUTH HADLEY METHODIST CHURCH

30 Carew Street

South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075-2705

Return address service requested.