

The Steeple

December 2023

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.

Join us for Worship each Sunday at 10:00.

December 3 We will light the First Advent candle, sing, pray and prepare for the coming of Jesus.

December 10 Light the Second Advent candle
Join in the festivities, 9:00 a.m.-12:00
before and after worship
Wrap Secret Santa gifts, Make a candy train, cards, crafts - some for our friends at home, some for you. Sing some Christmas carols.

December 17 Christmas Music service
Light the Third Advent candle.
A special service full of Christmas music.

**December 24 CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDLELIGHT
SERVICE at 6:00 p.m.**
Bring the whole family and find some sanity in a frantic season. This service brings a peaceful joy to our souls.
We will light the Fourth Advent Candle and the Christ candle.

December 25 Christmas Sunday
Have a blessed Christmas and share the real meaning of Christmas.



Church office: 413-532-0500
e-mail: office@UMCSouthHadley.org
Dr. Heather Reichgott, Minister of Music

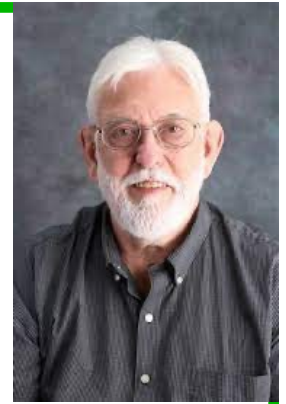
Pastor Ira Cameron
pastorira@juno.com
413 348-6282

Neighbors Helping Neighbors: 413-437-7593

Worship Sunday 10:00 a.m.
web site: UMCSouthHadley.org
Ann Felsentreger, Secretary

From our Pastor

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ, I wish you and all your families a very Merry Christmas, as we enter into this season of Advent. Advent is similar to the season of Lent, in that both are seen as times of expectancy as well as waiting, and in both cases the Lord cautions us to always be vigilant in our waiting.



Waiting is often very difficult for us, for it seem that for many, waiting is a lost art, and we have instead adopted the desire for instant gratification. "Why should I have to wait", we ask "why is this line moving so slow, hey, that's mine, I saw it first". Jesus, knows how difficult waiting can be, he and the Holy Spirit are waiting along with us, ever vigilant, guarding and guiding us to use our God given gifts and graces, knowing that we must always be prepared and ready to join with our Lord in the banquet he has prepared for us to join him.

I would invite you all to come and join with your family here at UMC of South Hadley, Holyoke and Granby, as together, we discover the excitement our Lord offers us as we learn together, the importance of waiting in "Eager Expectation" of celebrating the coming of the Christ Child, the promised one of God, who is our Lord and Savior. Come, and allow yourself to become an important part of the Christmas story, of God's beautiful Christmas gift to all man-kind.

Come, rejoice with your family here and offer God the precious gift of your presence here as we gather to experience the miracle of Christmas together.

Blessings Always, Pastor Ira

WHITE CHRISTMAS

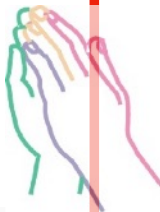


As is our tradition, the people of the church will prepare small gift bags for our folks at home. You are invited to help make the cards, crafts and cookies for the bags on December 10. You are also invited to help deliver those gifts, giving you a chance to visit with some one who is unable to attend 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.



PRAYER

Loving and caring God as each day begins for us we need not just to focus on what are the hurts and chaos of our world and our own lives, but also on all that you have blessed us with. This time of the year brings the end of the harvest season and the official day of Thanksgiving. But should we not be giving thanks to you always and focusing on whose we are and what that means? We thank you for being with us each day. Amen.



Submitted by Virginia Ahart, Christ United Methodist Church of Northampton

CELEBRATION, CONCERNS & MORE



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Carol Brunelle, Beth Dietz, Marion Winters, Jessica Guarnera, Dave Fanaras, Tim O'Donnell, Lily Marion, Kathy Washburn, Darlene Dout, Heidi Barta, Renata Cournoyer, Lucy Huegli, Bill Guarnera, Andrea Schlachter, Dee Brooksbank Kelly & Steve Camp, Dot Lambert & Family, Nancy Uhl & Family, Kevin McLaughlin, Bill Pead, Bill Beyer, Cathy Demers, Adele Reynolds Family, Family of Samantha Snopek, Mark Felsentreger

†Prayers and sympathy for Dot Lambert on the death of her husband Fred.

STEEPLE LIGHTING

Our steeple is lit during the month of December in loving memory of Jeff, John and Jack by Lois Felsentreger.



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.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS PLANTS ORDER FORM

We will be ordering our Christmas Poinsettia plants. Your cost is \$7.00 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 10th.



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

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 10th*******

Mark Your Calendar

December 5 : 9:00 a.m. Discussion with
Pastor Ira
6:00 p.m. Council & Trustee in
Fellowship Hall & on Zoom

December 10: 9:00-noon UWF workshop,
before& after worship help make cards
& a craft for our Friends at Home & put
together White Christmas bags

December 12: 9:00 a.m. Discussion with
Pastor Ira

December 13: 9:00 a.m. UWF in Fellowship Hall

December 17: 10:00 a.m. **Christmas Music
Service**

**December 24: 6:00 p.m. Christmas
Candlelight Service**

Casseroles for Kate's Kitchen are due.



THE CASSEROLES FOR KATE'S KITCHEN ARE DUE DECEMBER 24



Thanks to all who helped, 6 casseroles were delivered in November to Kate's
Kitchen. Thank you to Carol & Tom Deren for delivering the casseroles.

Casseroles are due on December 24. You can make it earlier and put in in the church freezer.
Everyone is invited to help do the work of God by helping feed hungry people.

All are invited to **join the United Women of Faith** on December 13 at 9:00 a.m. in
Fellowship Hall. Carol will lead us in devotion and Rose will be hostess.

JOIN THE FESTIVITIES! Be a helper.



December 10.
9:00 a.m.-12:00 before & after worship



There be Christmas music & cookies to eat.

For the White Christmas bags for our Friends at Home
There'll be candy to **make candy trains** for you too

Make cards Help fill the White Christmas bags.

Rose will help us make a **craft star** - some for our
friends & some for you.

Wrap gifts for Secret Santa

Needed is a little more wrapping paper & ribbon.



FROM OUR LAY LEADER

Pain seems like a strange way to begin a December article, but I think people know I go in odd directions. With all the joy and anticipation of Christmas, there is another side that we mostly ignore, hoping it will go away. Most of us have lost loved ones, not only in recent times, but also years ago, and being surrounded with the merriment can tug at our heartstrings. We all have suffered the loss of special people in our lives, and we tend to think of them at Christmas. The hole they left in our lives feels bigger then, and as though the cold and waning sunlight have not taken enough of a toll, loneliness and pain now seep in. It's reality, folks. It's okay to acknowledge that even though the seasonal music, the colorful sights, and the special cookies are beautiful, we still have all the regular emotions, and some of them are not joyful.



Oddly, that often takes me to Easter, and I tend to think of Mary, and her pain when her son's birthday (whenever that really was) came around. People were not exchanging gifts and decorating trees then, they were spreading the Word and trying to stay alive. Such a contrast to today's celebrations. I realize how weird it is to write about Easter in December, but life and death go hand in hand, and the life and death of Jesus gave us the most incredible gift of all, the gift of eternal life. That gift came with unspeakable pain and suffering, and I think it's important to remember why Christmas is so important. No life, no death, no life.



Wishing you a very Merry Christmas, the beginning of the story of eternal life.

Mary Lou

NEED MORE HATS, MITTENS, SCARVES

Hat & mitten Christmas tree is in the entranceway to the sanctuary and there are hats & mittens and scarves on it. But more are needed. There are the 90 children in the Secret Santa program. New are best but slightly used are welcome. All sizes are needed especially older youth. This small mission project has been going on in our church for what seems like forever and the children and adults who are cold appreciate the hats and mittens.



JOIN PASTOR IRA

Pastor Ira invites you to join him in Fellowship Hall at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesdays for conversation and fellowship. We will gather every Tuesday and decide what we will discuss.



UWF BAKE SALE - THANK YOU

Thank you for your generosity. The UM Women received \$182 from the 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 and YouTube



Pastor Ira Cameron
413 348-6282
pastorira@juno.com

If you are in need of prayers or need to speak with pastor call or email.
e-mail: office@UMCSouthHadley.org
Church office 413 532-0500 Leave a message.
web site: UMCSouthHadley.org

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS



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

†Casseroles for Kate's Kitchen †White Christmas bags for Friends at Home
†Secret Santa †Food For Friends †St Pauley Textiles Inc. used clothes drop off
†Light the Steeple in honor of someone. †CWS Blankets



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
30 Carew Street
South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075-2705
Return address service requested.