

# St. James United Methodist Church

646 Daniel Webster Highway, PO Box 895  
Merrimack, NH 03054



## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Ministers: Rev. Lynne Mentzer and All the People!

Director of Music: Darlene Skene

Office Hours: Mon - Thurs 8:00 am – 2:00 pm

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Visit us on the web: [stjames-umchurch.org](http://stjames-umchurch.org)

Facebook: St. James UMC

Welcome to on-line worship from St. James United Methodist Church!

We are pleased to have you as part of our family of faith today and every Sunday.

Visit [www.stjames-umchurch.org](http://www.stjames-umchurch.org) and click on online worship at the top of the homepage. Turn your sound on and follow along with this bulletin.

The announcements are at the end of the bulletin.

November 29, 2020  
First Sunday of Advent

In the Darkness of Despair, the Light of Hope



**GATHERING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST**

GATHERING MUSIC

Darlene Skene

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO ADVENT SERIES

Rev. Lynne Mentzer

GREETING OF PEACE

INTROIT "I Believe" *Anonymous Jewish poem, music by Mark A. Miller* Robin House

I believe in the sun, even when it's not shining.  
I believe in love, even when I don't feel it.  
I believe in God, even when God is silent.

**PRAYING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF HOPE

Pat Garland

In the darkness of despair, the Light of Hope shines brightest.  
As we light this Advent candle, let us give thanks for the Light of the world,  
Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

## HEARING GOD'S WORD IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 3: 1-6

Pat Garland

HYMN

"Wild and Lone, the Prophet's Voice" No. 2089

Darlene Skene

Wild and lone the prophet's voice echoes through the desert still,  
Calling us to make a choice, bidding us to do God's will:  
"Turn from sin and be baptized; cleanse your heart and mind and soul.  
Quitting all the sin you prized, yield your life to God's control."

"Bear the fruit repentance sows: lives of justice, truth, and love.  
Trust no other claim than those; set your heart on things above.  
Soon the Lord will come in power, burning clean the threshing floor:  
Then will flames the chaff devour; wheat alone shall fill God's store."

With such preaching stark and bold John proclaimed salvation near,  
And his timeless warnings hold words of hope to all who hear.  
So we dare to journey on, led by faith through ways untrod,  
Till we come at last like John – to behold the Lamb of God.

MESSAGE *In the Darkness of Despair, the Light of Hope*

Rev. Lynne Mentzer

## SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

GRATITUDE MOMENT

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND DEDICATION

**O God, we confess that in the darkness of despair we often forget to look for your Light. We forget that your gift of hope shatters our darkness just as your gift of Jesus shatters our many small deaths. May the gifts we bring in his name be blessed and multiplied by your Spirit of generosity. Amen.**

## GOING FORTH IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

### SOULWORK ASSIGNMENT: Finding Hope

\* HYMN                      “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” No. 196                      Darlene Skene

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set they people free;  
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;  
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,  
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
By thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

\* BLESSING

\* EXTROIT

Darlene Skene



This Week’s Events at St. James – November 29, 2020	
Today, Sunday 11/29	9:30 am Worship
Tuesday, 12/1	9:30 am Food Pantry 7:00 pm Finance Committee meeting
Wednesday, 12/2	9:00 am Clothes Closet 10:30 am Zoom Virtual Coffee Hour
Saturday, 12/5	Men’s Breakfast cancelled
Next Sunday, 12/6	9:30 am Worship

# Announcements–November 29, 2020

## **Suspending In-person Worship**

Taking into consideration the increasing number of COVID cases in New Hampshire, our church council held a special meeting on Thursday, November 19. The council voted in favor of suspending in-person worship offering online only worship beginning with the November 29 worship service, and continuing through Advent. The Church council will reevaluate whether to reopen or continue with remote worship services at their January 12, 2021 meeting.

## **Clothes Closet Closing**

Because of the increased health risk associated with COVID-19, the Clothes Closet will also be closed and will reopen when in-person worship services resume. In case of dire need, Clothes Closet director Joyce Hawkins will meet clients by appointment only.

## **Bishop's Day on the Granite District**

Bishop Devadhar is planning a time of listening and sharing on Wednesday, December 2 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. All are invited to join this virtual gathering. A Zoom invitation will be sent to all.

## **ZOOM In for Virtual Coffee Hour Wednesday Mornings**

At 10:30 AM each Wednesday morning, 16-20 church friends turn on their laptop computers and ZOOM in for our weekly virtual coffee hour. Invitations are e-mailed out to the entire church family no later than Tuesday afternoon – just click and join in on Wednesday morning. We check in with each other, share stories and God-moments, pray and laugh together. Won't you join us? If you haven't received your invitation by e-mail, please contact the church office. Hope to see you Wednesday!

## **Giving Tree**

During the Advent season the outreach team would like to help families buy Christmas gifts and other essentials such as groceries and gas. If you would like to donate Target, Walmart, grocery or gas gift cards, you may drop them off or mail them to the church.

## **Donate Wrapping Paper to Nashua Children's Home**

We are collecting holiday wrapping paper, bows and tape for the Nashua Children's Home. You may bring donations to the church on Sunday or during office hours on or before Thursday, December 17.

## **Donate to Meals on Wheels Holiday Gift Program**

Each year the St. Joseph Community Services staff, with tremendous help and support from the community, collects needed items and puts together gift bags for all of the Meals on Wheels participants – approximately 1300-1400! The following items are needed: 1. Warm clothing items – gender neutral and one size fits all (specifically hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, fuzzy socks with rubber grips), 2. Plug in night lights, 3. Mini first aid kits, 4. Hand sanitizers (secured in Ziploc bags). Drop off items by December 2 to the SJCS office, 395 DW Hwy Merrimack. For more info call Joan at (603) 424-9967 or email [jbarretto@sjcsinc.org](mailto:jbarretto@sjcsinc.org)

## **Men's Breakfast Cancelled**

The St. James United Methodist Men's monthly breakfast on Saturday, December 5 has been cancelled.