

St. James United Methodist Church

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



Ministers: Rev. Lynne Mentzer and All the People!

Director of Music: Darlene Skene

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

Office Telephone: 424-7459 Parsonage: 424-2758

Food Pantry: Donna Johnson 440-9597

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Prayer Request E-mail: sjprayerchain@gmail.com

Visit us on the web: 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 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.

December 13, 2020
Third Sunday of Advent

In the Darkness of Fear, the Light of Love



GATHERING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

GATHERING MUSIC Darlene Skene
WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS 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 CANDLES Noreen Hoisington
In the darkness of despair, the Light of Hope shines brightest.
In the darkness of anxiety, the Light of Peace shines steadiest.
In the darkness of fear, the Light of Love shines warmest.
As we light these Advent candles, 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

Luke 1: 26-38

Noreen Hoisington

HYMN

"To a Maid Engaged to Joseph" No. 215 (vs. 1,2,6)

Darlene Skene

To a maid engaged to Joseph, the angel Gabriel came.
"Fear not," the angel told her, "I come to bring good news,
Good news I come to tell you, good news, I say, good news."

"For you are highly favored by God the Lord of all,
Who even now is with you. You are on earth most blest,
You are most blest, most blessed, God chose you, you are blest!"

As Mary heard the angel, she wondered at his words.
"Behold, I am your hand-maid," she said unto her God.
"So be it; I am ready according to your word."

MESSAGE *In the Darkness of Fear, the Light of Love*

Rev. Lynne Mentzer

SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

INVITATION TO GENEROUS GIVING AND GRATITUDE MOMENT

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND DEDICATION

O God, we confess that as we anticipate once again the birth of your Son, we stand in awe of the mystery of your gifts. May the gifts we bring this day reflect your generosity through your church to bless your people. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

GOING FORTH IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

SOULWORK ASSIGNMENT: Trusting Love

* HYMN “People, Look East” No. 202 (vs. 1,3,4) Darlene Skene

People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east: Love, the Star, is on the way.

Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

* BLESSING

* EXTROIT

Darlene Skene

This Week's Events at St. James – December 13, 2020	
Today, Sunday 12/13	9:30 am Online worship
Tuesday, 12/15	9:30 am Food Pantry 7:00 pm SPRC meeting
Wednesday, 12/16	10:30 am Zoom Virtual Coffee Hour
Thursday, 12/17	7:00 pm Advent Bible Study via Zoom
Next Sunday, 12/20	9:30 am Online worship



Announcements–December 13, 2020

Advent Bible Study

It's not too late to join our Advent Bible Study (using Zoom technology) on Thursday evenings, from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. In "The Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent", author and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine shows how the Gospel narratives connect to the Old Testament, highlights the role of women in first-century Jewish culture, and emphasizes the importance of Mary's visitation, the Roman census, the stable, the star of Bethlehem, and the flight to Egypt. Our study guide will be the Bible itself, so please be sure to bring yours to each session. If you really want to purchase a study guide, they are on sale at Amazon for \$14.29 each, or at Cokesbury Books for \$12.99 - the choice is yours - but do not feel you need to buy one.

Rev. Jim Mentzer will facilitate the discussion with participants from both North Salem UMC and St. James so we are anticipating a great group and lively conversation. We will send Zoom invitations by email. Got questions? Call the church office at 424-7459 or email stjamesmrmk@gmail.com.

Blue Christmas Service, Monday, December 21 via ZOOM

Our Blue Christmas or Longest Night Service will be offered via ZOOM this year on Monday, December 21 at 7 PM. This service is especially appropriate for those who find the holidays challenging due to the loss of a loved one, illness or depression, or some other burden that Christ alone can lift. Participate on your own or invite a friend. Please sign up with the church office and include your e-mail address to receive the zoom invitation. Also, those attending this year's service are invited to have a candle and a means to light it in place before we begin.

Christmas Eve Services – On-line and In-Person

Our traditional Christmas Eve service will be recorded and posted on YouTube this year due to COVID precautions. A Christmas Eve service with Bishop Devadhar, members of the Cabinet and others will also be available through our web site on Thursday, December 24.

In addition, weather permitting, we will gather in-person in the parking lot in front of the sanctuary for a half-hour service of lessons and carols starting at 4 PM. Masks are required; hats and mittens are recommended. Please sign up ahead of time for contact tracing purposes. Call the office at 603-424-7459 if you have questions.

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.