

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

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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 20, 2020
Fourth Sunday of Advent

In the Darkness of Uncertainty, the Light of Joy



GATHERING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

GATHERING MUSIC	Darlene Skene
WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS	Rev. Lynne Mentzer
GREETING OF PEACE	
INTROIT “I Believe” <i>Anonymous Jewish poem, music by Mark A. Miller</i>	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	Donna Wallace
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. In the darkness of uncertainty, the Light of Joy shines truest. 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 2: 1-7

Donna Wallace

HYMN

"Love Has Come" No. 3059

Darlene Skene

Love has come – a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
What is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

MESSAGE *In the Darkness of Uncertainty, the Light of Joy*

Rev. Lynne Mentzer

SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

GRATITUDE MOMENT

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND DEDICATION

O God, we confess that we are more familiar with uncertainty these days than with joy. Yet, you forgive our weakness and bless us with hope, peace, love and joy. Thank you! May the gifts we bring as a sign of our gratitude be blessed to serve you and your people in Jesus' name, Amen.

GOING FORTH IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

SOULWORK ASSIGNMENT: Trusting Love

* HYMN

“Joy to the World” No. 246 (vs. 1,-4)

Darlene Skene

Joy to the World, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.

* BLESSING

* EXTROIT

Darlene Skene





Announcements–December 20, 2020

Advent Bible Study

There’s one more week in our Advent Bible Study (using Zoom technology) Wednesday evening, from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. “The Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent.”

Rev. Jim Mentzer and Rev. Lynne 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 – Online

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.

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!

Men’s Breakfast Cancelled

The St. James United Methodist Men’s monthly breakfast on Saturday, January 2 has been cancelled.

This Week’s Events at St. James – December 20, 2020	
Today, Sunday 12/20	9:30 am Online worship
Monday, 12/21	7:00 pm Blue Christmas Service via Zoom
Tuesday, 12/22	9:30 am Food Pantry 7:00 pm Trustees meeting
Wednesday, 12/23	10:30 am Zoom Virtual Coffee Hour 7:00 pm Advent Bible Study via Zoom
Thursday, 12/24	4:00 pm Traditional Christmas Eve Service Online
Friday, 12/25	Merry Christmas!
Next Sunday, 12/27	9:30 am Online worship