



THE BEACON



First Church Congregational
United Church of Christ
 26 Pleasant Street
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Worship on Sundays at 10:00 AM
In-person & on Facebook Live

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“GETTING PARSONAL”

Rev. William D. Ingraham



“Anticipation is half the fun,” she had just said to me, and not for the first time. I was no more convinced on this occasion than I had been the previous time she said it, or the time before that, or the time before that, or the time before that. Writing about it now, it occurs to me that she was onto something. **NOT** that anticipation **IS** half the fun. That still is not my experience. But she was right in thinking that **I** needed to learn better **how** to wait, and to anticipate. It’s still the case today.

What is it that makes waiting so difficult? Is it because the stakes are high, and things might or might not go as anticipated, or hoped for, or even needed? Is it because we don’t have control over the outcome, that we’re unable to make sure something happens in a particular way? Maybe we’re afraid we’ll miss out, that there’s a limited quantity of whatever it is we’re waiting for, hoping for, or needing. Maybe it’s hard to wait because we’ve waited before and in the end, we’ve not gotten what we wanted or needed. Or maybe we just want what we want when we want it! Wanting what we want *right* now sounds so very childish, but I know it’s the way I feel sometimes. Perhaps that’s the case for you, too.

I'm not sure how one learns to wait patiently, or better yet, to enjoy the time of waiting and anticipating. I've had a few good waiting experiences. Over the years I have enjoyed saving for something I intend to purchase or do. As my funds increased, I knew the thing I wanted was getting closer. That became fun, almost like winning a game. And I've enjoyed physical progress, as with my knee. While I dreaded the knee replacement surgery, I've both enjoyed and appreciated the process of rebuilding my strength and agility – a process I'm undertaking even now. With each bit of improvement, I can see the final goal drawing nearer. So in those ways, the process of actively waiting, working toward a goal, has built joy in the midst of all the anticipation. It's no longer a passive waiting. It's an active one.

Advent is a time of waiting and of anticipation. The weeks leading up to Christmas are active. The waiting is spent by preparing the way. There are physical things to do. We decorate the church and our homes, getting ready for the Christmas celebration that begins on Christmas Eve. The choirs rehearse, deacons make ready, sermons get planned, and congregants generously buy toys, hats, gloves, food and more to spread Christmas joy as part of our outreach to folks in our community. We get quite busy this time of year, so much so that the Board and most of our committees and ministry teams postpone their meetings until January.

The active waiting of Advent is also spiritual. We open our hearts and minds to the idea that Christ comes to us still. It is an intentional process. Born in Bethlehem's manger so very long ago, we open ourselves to receiving anew the gift of love and compassion that that baby Jesus portends. Welcoming him this Christmas means offering ourselves to cradle him in our hearts and our lives. We embrace his message, taking upon ourselves his words, his actions, and intentions. Like him, we learn to live in God's service. Like him, we learn to offer ourselves to others, putting our lives on the line to make love known. Like him, we rest assured by God's boundless love and compassion, that in the end, all things are well. All manner of things are and will be well.

See you in church.

~Bill



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NEW MEMBER CLASS

Several people have asked about joining First Church Congregational. We will receive new members on Sunday, December 17th in the service of worship.



A brief Membership Class will take place the previous week, on Sunday, December 10th, at 11:15 AM, in the pastor's office. This will be a chance to learn more about the church, our structure, and our hopes and expectations for church members. It's also a chance to learn about our denomination, the United Church of Christ.

If you need further information or have any questions, please speak with me.

~ Pastor Bill



Rejoice and Come Home...

Advent & Christmas 2023

First Church Congregational

Methuen, MA

Sunday, December 3rd:

10:00 AM – Worship – *1st Sunday of Advent* ~ Communion Sunday

Sunday, December 10th:

10:00 AM – Worship – *2nd Sunday of Advent* ~ Gifts to the Manger

Sunday, December 17th:

10:00 AM – Worship – *3rd Sunday of Advent* ~ Advent Cantata

Sunday, December 24th:

10:00 AM – Worship – *4th Sunday of Advent*

7:00 PM – *Christmas Eve Service* ~ Candlelight & Carols

Sunday, December 25th:

Merry Christmas to All!



Our worship services are held in person. We hope you can join us!

Though, worship will continue to be broadcast each Sunday, at 10:00 AM, and others times as listed on Facebook Live (www.facebook.com/FirstChurchMethuen) and posted later on YouTube (www.youtube.com/channel/UCfLSjhXs9UG8yC89aB8evrA).

2023 CHRISTMAS GIVING

If you wish to make a Christmas donation or poinsettia order, please use this form and return it to the church office *by Sunday, December 10th*. Please note: All donations received before this deadline will be listed in the "Christmas Giving Booklet". Thank You.

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Poinsettia Plant for Altar

6" pot, **single** plant at **\$15.00**; how many? _____; total \$_____*

7" pot, **double** plant at **\$25.00**; how many? _____; total \$_____*

Please print when completing

In Loving Memory of _____

In Celebration/Honor of _____
(circle choice)

Given by _____

**After the Christmas Eve service, all plants will be delivered to
a homebound member or friend of the church*

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Donation

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN _____ GENERAL FUND _____

OPERATING EXPENSE _____ ORGAN RESTORATION _____

OUTREACH _____ OTHER _____

Please print when completing

Given in Loving Memory of _____

In Celebration/Honor of _____
(circle choice)

Given by _____

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Please make checks payable to: ***First Church Congregational***

Thank you!



Sunday Worship

10:00 AM

We hope you will join us!

For those who cannot attend in person, worship continues to be broadcast each Sunday, at 10:00 AM, on Facebook Live (www.facebook.com/FirstChurchMethuen) and posted after the service on our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/channel/UCfLSjhXs9UG8yC89aB8evrA). The service can be viewed at any time on either platform. An Order of Worship will be emailed out each Friday before the service.



Breakfast with Bill

Join Pastor Bill for **"Breakfast with Bill"** – an informal time for friendship and conversation on any topic. We will gather on **Wednesday, December 13th at 8:00 AM**, at Ellie's Farmhouse, 436 Broadway in Methuen. And remember, it's dutch treat!



Breakfast Group from November



Prayer and Visit Requests



If you, or someone you know, is in need of prayer or a visit, please contact Rev. Ingraham at pastor.bill.ingraham@gmail.com or 978-687-1240.

To have someone included on the bulletin prayer list, please let Roberta in the Church Office know at firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com or 978-687-1240.

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IN CASE OF SNOW...

As we enter the snow season, please be advised that on weekdays, if school is cancelled, the church office will not be open. If a blizzard is predicted for a given Sunday, if there are any changes to the time of worship, or worship is cancelled, please check our church web page, www.firstchurchmethuen.com and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/firstchurchmethuen).



Changes to worship will also be noted on Channel **WBZ-TV (Channel 4)**, **WBZ NewsRadio 1030**, **WCVB (Channel 5)**, www.TheBostonChannel.com, **WHDH (Channel 7)** or **The CW (Channel 56)** for cancellation notifications.



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Calendar Updates?



Please help keep the church calendar current. Be sure to let Roberta know of any and all items that should go on the Church calendar. This is the only way the calendar can be kept current and up-to-date. Roberta can be reached at 978-687-1240 or firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

From the Chair of the Church Board...

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!!! With the official start of Advent being December 3rd (this year), it always surprises me to see so many Christmas decorations up earlier and earlier in the year. Even as I walk my dog through the neighborhood, I see fully adorned trees and yard decorations even before Thanksgiving. I am not a Grinch, though, and secretly enjoy seeing the spirit arrive before the first flakes of winter. In our sanctuary and parish halls, we have a lot of energy here at First Church Congregational. This means that we have plenty going on, including:

- Chapel School is so popular this year that we actually have a waiting list. I would like to thank Cindy Mazella and the legacy she left after retiring as well as Gina Colarusso for fulfilling the vision of excellent preschool for our community. This also could not be the success without our dedicated teachers and our school administrator, Roberta. Thank you all!!!
- The Methuen Festival of Trees is a 30 year old institution in Methuen, and we have two entries this year. One is from our Chapel students, teachers, and parents, and another is from the congregation spearheaded by Lori Bennett and her family. Thank you all for your diligence, beauty, and design for this worthwhile organization. If you have a chance, I cannot recommend it enough.
- The First Church choir is in full swing! With the beginning of Advent, now is a great time to join them. Thank you to Mike and all the choir members that contribute to Pastor Bill's worship.
- The Capital Campaign continues, with the Narthex project continuing. The demolition of the damaged areas is complete, but the rebuilding will start soon. We have quotes being finalized, so work should commence soon. Thanks, Allan!!!!
- Our Stewardship drive is complete, and I would like to thank all of you for pledging. You are all vital to the operation of this church and its missions – without your commitment, our community would be deeply impacted. Also, for those who increased their pledge – THANK YOU!!!
- Our Outreach group is hard at work (as always!). With November comes our annual turkey dinner drive, so thank you to all who were able to help make the holiday magical. For Christmas, we will continue our traditions of the mitten tree, gifts to the manger, and more. Between the focused projects and our continuing food pantry, helping so many in our community, there are numerous ways to make an impact.
- ...and so much more!

So, if you're looking for some way to help our church and our community, there's plenty of options. Also, there's always the prayer shawl ministry, other outreach projects, singing or ringing in one of our outstanding choirs, or just joining the walking group to help yourself. There are so many new opportunities available through our historic congregation, so feel free to seek out what you would like and help our neighbors & neighborhood at the same time.

As always, all are welcome to chat anytime with me. I love to hear your ideas and suggestions. We also have a lot of other activities and missions scheduled, so I would love your input. I know you all work so hard to make our church a blessing to our families and neighbors, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Let's keep the energy and drive rolling, continuing to seek God, care for each other, and improve our community.

God bless & Merry Christmas!!!

Josh Ferry



Stewardship Ministry Team...

Together we celebrated the final Sunday of our stewardship campaign on November 12 with blessing of our pledges and a delicious chicken pot pie luncheon. Thanks to the many helpers who helped make it possible. Many of you have already ***made a difference*** by returning your pledge card so that ***we can make it happen***.

On Sunday November 5th, we heard from the leaders of three Outreach programs that First Church supports: MAN, Inc., Neighbors in Need, and the Chapel School. Each gave a motivating talk about how their program makes a difference in our community and the lives of the people they support. We also heard about the many other outreach opportunities that we can participate in, and it is incredible to realize what a difference we can make. Because of the support of the members of First Church who contribute their time, talents, and treasures, ***together we make it happen***.

We continue to receive pledges in the mail each week. If you haven't returned your pledge yet, it is not too late to do so. If you need a pledge packet, please contact the church office and one will be mailed to you. Also, if you are an electronic giver, please be sure to return an electronic giving form, even if there is no change of information. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Ministry Team. If you would like a printed version of this year's Narrative Budget, copies are available outside the church office.

Stewardship Ministry Team:

Kathy Romano – Chairperson

Rev. Bill Ingraham, Irene Maggio, Ken Peck, Marilyn Peck, Robyn Sliney and Kim Valcourt

Together We Make a Difference



We Praise God



We Love Each Other



We Help Our Neighbors

Your Pledge Makes It All Happen

Musical Musings

Friends:

Advent is here....and so is the madness of the commercialized holiday season when Christmas music is everywhere and in all the ads on the radio, TV, and the internet, gently but definitely encouraging you to celebrate the real reason for the season: spending money!

What? That's not the real reason?

At First Church, we resist that temptation to commercialize Advent by not buying into the secular pressure to sing Christmas music too early, to rush to birth the Child in the manger. There's a lot of great Advent music, and we are planning to use it through the first three Sundays of Advent, including, of course, for our Advent Cantata on Dec 17th. I hope you'll plan to be there in person to experience all the wonderful live music of the Cantata: solos, small groups, and of course, our amazing choir immersed in the spirit of Advent, crying out: "Come, Emmanuel and set us free!"

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, Dec 24th, in the morning, we will begin to sing some of the less familiar Christmas carols...and then, at 7pm on Christmas Eve, we will sing LOTS of carols...come early, and join in the carol sing that we will do beginning at 6:45pm...

If you have college students home for break who would like to sing, or if you are interested in joining the choir just for Christmas, reach out. We'd love to have you!

The Christmas season continues through January 7, 2024. We will have the chance to sing lots of carols on Dec 31 and again on Jan 7, with a special song by our children as we celebrate Epiphany and close out the Christmas season. I hope to see many of you there in person!

I wish you the happiest of holidays, and blessings in the New Year!

Peace and all good things,

Mike Boutin



From the Outreach Ministry Team

Book Drive Delivery

Thanks to the generosity of the members and friends of First Church, on November 2nd, 456 books were donated to the Comprehensive Grammar School in Methuen. The multiple boxes of books were enthusiastically and gratefully accepted by Katie Proietti, CGS Principal, and Michelle Sterner, Literacy Specialist for the school. Michelle previously was a faculty member of Chapel School and appreciated making a renewed connection with our church. They promised to share photos of students receiving the books and the very special bookmarks handmade by several members of the committee. We thank you all for the donations. Having books to give to students is a treat for the teachers as well as for the families who receive them.



NIN Tuesday Thanksgiving Food Pantry

The Outreach Team spearheaded the annual food drive to supplement the Thanksgiving distribution of food provided by Neighbors in Need through our weekly food pantry. The bags handed out on Tuesday, November 21st, were more generously filled than is typical at the Tuesday food pantry, and contained some special Thanksgiving food items, thanks to the food and monetary donations you made. Neighbors in Need provided \$25 gift cards and pies for each family served. We are thankful to Gina Colarusso and Chapel School for their generous donations of extra food and juice. And we are especially thankful to all the volunteers who helped organize the donations on Sunday, November 19th and distributed the food on Tuesday.



Gifts to the Manger/Adopt a Child

Christmas is fast approaching, and we are ramping up our efforts to once again provide toys and gifts to benefit the children who participate in the worthy activities at Methuen Area Neighborhood (MAN), Inc. We are asking for donations of unwrapped gifts for children ages 8-17 years through Sunday, December 10th as part of the Gifts to the Manger program. Donations can be placed in the Gifts to the Manger box located in the Crossroads. We will be delivering the gifts on December 13th. Wrapping paper and tape will also be gladly accepted and passed along for use at MAN. Parents will be able to select gifts and wrap them for their children.



A separate but equally important program is called Adopt-a-Child, where members of our congregation volunteer to buy multiple gifts for one special child. These are children that Linda Soucy identifies as in critical need of support. If you are interested in becoming an “adopter” please speak to Lori Bennett.

A more detailed flyer is on the next page of this Beacon newsletter.

Hat and Mitten Tree

Chapel School will again be displaying its giving tree in the hall near the church office. Hats, mittens, and scarves can be placed on the tree during the Christmas season. The Prayer Shawl Ministry Team has been hard at work knitting and crocheting warm and festive donations. All items donated are distributed by Methuen Public Schools to those in need.



Outreach Ministry Team – *Cindy Bateson, Lori Bennett, Deb Brown, Cynthia Causbie, Jo Crosby, Barbara Donaghue, Ken Peck, Marilyn Peck, Carole and John Silva, and Becky Smith.*



Gifts to the Manger



This year's **Gifts to the Manger**, as last year, will be delivered to Methuen Arlington Neighborhood (MAN) Inc. and they will be given to about 150 children in the MAN program. There will be a designated box for your gifts at the Crossroads.

Please bring your unwrapped gift(s), for children between the ages of 8 and 17, to the church on:

- **Sundays 11/26, 12/3 & 12/10, before or after worship (10:00 – 11:00 AM)**
- **Weekdays until 12/8, from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM.**

Go to the parking lot door, ring the bell and we will meet you at the door.

MAN will also accept wrapping paper, ribbon, bows, and tape.

Whatever you can help with will be appreciated.

The gifts, and other items, will be delivered on Wednesday, December 14th, in time for MAN parents to wrap the gifts for their children. Thank-you in advance for your donations. These kids are wonderful children and really appreciate what they receive.



Adopt a Child

Another way you can help this year is by adopting a child. Contact me and I will send you a child's name and their wish list. Please purchase items on the list, wrap them, or put them in a Christmas bag, and drop it off at the church on the dates listed above.

All gifts will be delivered on Wednesday, December 14th. If you would like someone to shop for you, let me know and Cindy Bateson or I will shop for you.

Blessings,
Lori Bennett



The Annual Mitten Tree

The Annual Mitten Tree has long been a popular part of our Christmas celebration at First Church and is a joint effort between The Outreach Ministry Team and The Chapel School.

Our Mitten Tree will be placed in the crossroads, waiting to be filled with mittens, hats, and scarves. The children at Chapel School will see it every day!

Donations can also be brought during worship, Sundays at 10:00 AM. You may also bring your donations to the parking lot door, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 AM – 1:30 PM. Ring the bell and we will meet you at the door.

All donations of hats, scarves and mittens will be given to the Methuen Public Schools Family Resource Center to be distributed to those in need of warm accessories.

We will post pictures, as the tree fills up, on the Chapel School and First Church Facebook pages. We look forward to a tree covered with colorful and warm decorations.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets year-round and always welcomes anyone who wishes to be part of this ministry. Knitting or crocheting experience is not a prerequisite to becoming a member. Come for the fellowship and someone will be glad to help you if needed. Please contact Carol Gray or Debbie Bonfanti for more information.

We invite you to join us on **Wednesdays from 1:00 - 3:00 PM**,
in the parlor of First Church Congregational.

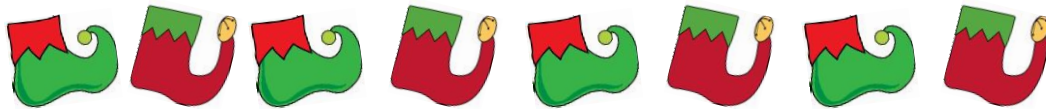
*Note: There will be no Prayer Shawl on Wednesday, December 27th,
due to the Christmas Holiday Week.*



Walking Group for Fitness and Fellowship

Tuesdays in December

Bundle up and join us for a brisk walk with friends as the temperature dips. We will continue to meet up to walk this winter, weather permitting. We will be walking on 12/5, 12/12, and 12/19 at the *Raymond J. Martin Riverside Park* at 971 Riverside Drive in Methuen. The town clears the hot-topped walking path of snow and ice, so it is usually safe for a winter walk. We have an email group you can join so you know if walking is cancelled. Contact Cindy Bateson if you would like to be added to the email group.



Open and Affirming (O&A) Committee

The following stories are written by members of the O&A Committee. We want to share with you why we are on this committee and why inclusion is important to us and the church. We invite you to read these personal stories as we continue this journey together.



“One of the first questions I am asked as the sponsor of the Open and Affirming committee is “How will this change our church.” My response is “it won’t!!” I can say this because we at First Church already embrace anyone on their faith and life journey without exception. It is a foundational element in our wedding, baptismal, and membership policies as well as core to our mission in our community.

However, not enough people outside our sanctuary know this, and that is the problem this committee seeks to address. We need to ensure that anyone who is thinking of entering the life and faith of our Christian family knows what we stand for. By becoming a recognized Open and Affirming church we will declare that ALL are welcome in no uncertain terms. This is our goal and I welcome your input and energy as we strive to truly welcome all to our table.”

~ Josh Ferry
Chair of the Board
First Church Congregational



My "WHY". Reasons for being part of the Open and Affirming Committee at FCC and an Ally for the LGBTQ+ community.

“I want to say that my very first reason was because of my daughter, but it goes further back to my best friend and cousin. We were raised Catholic and went to Catholic schools for most of our education. We often questioned in silence about how our religion told us to love one another but then taught that being gay was a sin. She is one of the brightest lights in our family. Has a smile that is contagious. She is the most giving, joyful, and loving person I know. Her sexuality was never an issue for me as I know what an amazing human being she is and all that is important to me is that she is happy and loved by whomever she chose as her wife.

My BIGGEST reason is for my children. Specifically, my daughter, Makayla. She came out when she was 14 years old. There was no drama around it, I didn’t think it was a phase, because I knew my daughter’s soul. But it was at this time that I first felt fear, fear of the discrimination that she was about to endure. You never want your child to struggle or face potential violence or hate because of who they are.

Makayla asked me a few weeks later why “God doesn’t love her” and it broke my heart. She was preparing to make her Confirmation, so it was right at the surface. I had to explain to her that she was created the way He wanted her to be. That was an epiphany moment for me and changed the trajectory of our faith journey. It was at that moment that we started to leave the Catholic Church. Makayla was the first to leave and came to First Church Congregational. It was at FCC that she made her Confirmation. I joined First Church because my daughter felt safe here being who she is.

I am extremely proud of Makayla and her husband. However, I have found over the years that I have to hold back my pride as a parent of a queer person, because of hate and discrimination. I decided

that I would do whatever I could to help educate others about the LGBTQ+ community and share my experiences. No one should have to hide who they are.

I have several inclusive pins that I wear when I am on campus at my job at MCPHS: a "She/Her" pin - promoting support of one's gender - chosen or biological and a rainbow pin that says "YOU ARE SAFE WITH ME". This is just a snippet of my reasons why. It is something I feel very passionate about. If you want to know more about being an Ally or more about our church becoming officially Open and Affirming, please reach out."

~ Becky Wright



O&A Committee: Sue Newton, *Chair*, Becky Wright, Maureen Wright, Makayla Lo Cicero, Bob Donaghue, Pastor Bill Ingraham, Josh Ferry, *Ex officio*



First Church Congregational tree, "Heavenly Blessings"



Done by the Bennett Family



The Chapel School

This was our first year participating in *Treats for Troops* and we collected a TON of candy! We cannot thank you all enough for your donations. The children colored some Veteran pictures, and we send those along with the candy. We look forward to making this a Chapel tradition.

We are all very excited for the Festival of Trees this year. We extend a HUGE thank you to Cindy Mazella and Leslie Buresh for all their efforts to make this year's tree amazing as usual! Our theme this year is "*The Great Outdoors*." Tree set up is almost complete and will open to the public on Saturday November 18th through Saturday December 3rd. You can check out all the details at www.methuenfestivaloftrees.com.

We are already planning our yummy Turkey Day feast with the children. We will have it on Monday and Tuesday, November 20th and 21st. We are excited to have Cindy join us for this event as well. She will be doing the cooking with Pat Romano, and we will have parent volunteers to help us with serving the children. We collected a ton of juice for Neighbors-in-Need, and we thank our families for their contributions!

The school will have a 1/2 day on Wednesday the 22nd of November, closing at 11:30 AM. We will then be closed on that Thursday and Friday to celebrate with our loved ones.

We are looking forward to our new outreach program "*Cards for Elders*," which will start in December. The children will be making and decorating Holiday Cards for the residents of Nevins Nursing home. This is sure to bring some Holiday cheer to those that may not regularly get into the Holiday spirit.

Our *Mitten Tree* will be filling up during the month of December. All the donations of mittens, hats and scarves will be delivered to the Methuen Public Schools Family Resource Center to be distributed to children in need. Working together, both First Church and Chapel School, help pay it forward to those who need it the most.

Staying healthy is our number one priority. We need to continue to take care of ourselves, eat healthy and get plenty of sleep so that we can all enjoy the Holidays with our family and friends.

Gina Colarusso
Director



Congratulations to the Chapel School
for taking 2nd Place
for "Best Tree Done by Children"
at the 2023 Methuen Festival of Trees!!



Our tree is "The Great Outdoors"

Come see the trees at the Festival through December 2nd!
www.MethuenFestivalofTrees.com

What's the REACH Ministry?



Do you know of someone facing surgery, recovering from surgery or living with a long-term illness? Do you know someone who has recently lost their job or could use financial support? Do you know someone who suffers from depression or is often down in the dumps around the holidays?

Maybe this person is you?

If so, we can help. Our new **REACH** Ministry wants to make sure that members of our community have a place to turn for support in their time of need. The term **REACH** stands for -- **R**eliable, **E**ngaging, **A**ble, **C**aring and **H**earfelt support.

Contact Judi Boyko or Pat King for more information.

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Need Financial Help?

If you, or another member of First Church you know, is need of some temporary financial assistance, please contact Rev. Ingraham at pastor.bill.ingraham@gmail.com or 978-687-1240.

Due to the generosity of Thomas Longworth, through his estate plan, there are some funds available for short term financial assistance of our members.

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Would you like to make an electronic donation to the church?



Use your smart phone or tablet by scanning this QR code!

Or visit our website at www.firstchurchmethuen.com and click the "Ways to Donate" page.

Thank you for your support.



Southern New England Conference

United Church of Christ

Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

Daily Lectionary Scripture References – December 2023 (Year B)

Fri., Dec. 1

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Zechariah 14:1-9
1 Thessalonians 4:1-18

Sat., Dec. 2

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Micah 2:1-13
Matthew 24:15-31

Sun., Dec. 3

First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37

Mon., Dec. 4

Psalm 79
Micah 4:1-5
Revelation 15:1-8

Tues., Dec. 5

Psalm 79
Micah 4:6-13
Revelation 18:1-10

Wed., Dec. 6

Psalm 79
Micah 5:1-5a
Luke 21:34-38

Thurs., Dec. 7

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
Hosea 6:1-6
1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

Fri., Dec. 8

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
Jeremiah 1:4-10
Acts 11:19-26

Sat., Dec. 9

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
Ezekiel 36:24-28
Mark 11:27-33

Sun., Dec. 10

Second Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

Mon., Dec. 11

Psalm 27
Isaiah 26:7-15
Acts 2:37-42

Tues., Dec. 12

Psalm 27
Isaiah 4:2-6
Acts 11:1-18

Wed., Dec. 13

Psalm 27
Malachi 2:10—3:1
Luke 1:5-17

Thurs., Dec. 14

Psalm 126
Habakkuk 2:1-5
Philippians 3:7-11

Fri., Dec. 15

Psalm 126
Habakkuk 3:2-6
Philippians 3:12-16

Sat., Dec. 16

Psalm 126
Habakkuk 3:13-19
Matthew 21:28-32

Sun., Dec. 17

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

Mon., Dec. 18

Psalm 125
1 Kings 18:1-18
Ephesians 6:10-17

Tues., Dec. 19

Psalm 125
2 Kings 2:9-22
Acts 3:17—4:4

Wed., Dec. 20

Psalm 125
Malachi 3:16—4:6
Mark 9:9-13

Thurs., Dec. 21

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
2 Samuel 6:1-11
Hebrews 1:1-4

Fri., Dec. 22

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
2 Samuel 6:12-19
Hebrews 1:5-14

Sat., Dec. 23

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Judges 13:2-24
John 7:40-52

Sun., Dec. 24

Christmas Eve
Fourth Sunday of Advent
2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm
89:1-4, 19-26
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Mon., Dec. 25

Christmas Day
Isaiah 62:6-12
Psalm 97
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20

Tues., Dec. 26

Psalm 148
Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15
Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60

Wed., Dec. 27

Psalm 148
Exodus 33:18-23
1 John 1:1-9

Thurs., Dec. 28

Psalm 148
Jeremiah 31:15-17
Matthew 2:13-18

Fri., Dec. 29

Psalm 148
Isaiah 49:5-15
Matthew 12:46-50

Sat., Dec. 30

Psalm 148
Proverbs 9:1-12
2 Peter 3:8-13

Sun., Dec. 31

Isaiah 61:10—62:3
Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40

Happy Birthday!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAY

- 01 Mary Simonian
- 02 Nathaniel Hodgkins
- 03 Emily Carter
- 05 Michelle Wright
- 06 Neil Bateson, Susan Kerr
- 12 Bob Newton
- 14 Jessica McGinn-Napier
- 18 Susan Riedel
- 19 Andrew Pavlenkov
- 23 Maureen Wright
- 26 Allan Barlow



JANUARY BIRTHDAY

- 04 Deborah MaueSprague
- 06 Cathy Gable
- 07 Ella Napier, Janet Towler



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY

12/9 Irene & Peter Maggio

Married 46 years

JANUARY ANNIVERSARY

1/6 Robert & Susan Newton

Married 45 years

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Worship Service <i>Sundays at 10:00 AM</i> In-Person & on Facebook Live www.facebook.com/firstchurchmethuen						
3 Communion 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:15 AM Fellowship Time	4	5 10:00 AM Walking Group (Riverside Park) 4:00 PM Food Pantry 6:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	6 1:00 PM Prayer Shawl	7 6:30 PM First Church Bells	8	9
10 2nd Advent Sunday Gifts to the Manger 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:15 AM Fellowship Time 11:15 AM New Member Class	11 4:30 PM Chapel Staff 6:30 PM Outreach	12 10:00 AM Walking Group (Riverside Park) 4:00 PM Food Pantry	13 8:00 AM Breakfast with Bill 1:00 PM Prayer Shawl 7:00 PM Diaconate	14 6:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:30 PM First Church Bells	15	16
17 3rd Advent Sunday Advent Cantata New Members 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:15 AM Fellowship Time	18 1:00 PM Cook for Bread & Roses 6:30 PM Stewardship	19 10:00 AM Walking Group (Riverside Park) 4:00 PM Food Pantry Christmas Distribution	20 January 2020 BEACON deadline 1:00 PM Prayer Shawl	21 6:30 PM First Church Bells	22 Chapel School Closes at 11:30 AM	23
24 4th Advent Sunday Christmas Eve 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:15 AM Fellowship Time 7:00 PM Candlelight Service (Christmas Eve Only)	25 Chapel School Closed Merry Christmas 	26 Chapel School Closed 10:00 AM Walking Group (Riverside Park) 4:00 PM Food Pantry	27 Chapel School Closed 6:30 PM O&A	28 Chapel School Closed 6:30 PM First Church Bells	29 Chapel School Closed	30
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Dates and times are subject to change

First Church Congregational

United Church of Christ

26 Pleasant Street

Methuen, MA 01844-3199

Address Service Requested