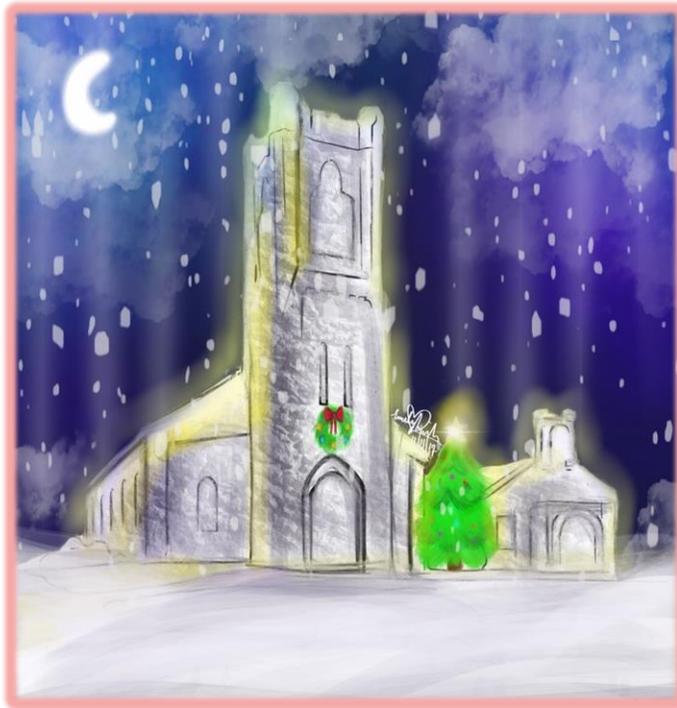


DECEMBER 2022



# THE BEACON



## *First Church Congregational*

*United Church of Christ*

*26 Pleasant Street*

*Methuen, MA 01844-3199*

Telephone: (978) 687-1240

**Rev. William D. Ingraham, Senior Pastor**

[pastor.bill.ingraham@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.bill.ingraham@gmail.com)

**Roberta Jurovich, Office Manager**

[firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com)

**Mike Boutin, Minister of Music**

[boutinerjr@gmail.com](mailto:boutinerjr@gmail.com)

[www.firstchurchmethuen.com](http://www.firstchurchmethuen.com)

*Worship on Sundays at 10:00 AM*

\* \* \* \* \*

## **“GETTING PARSONAL”**

**Rev. William D. Ingraham**



Maybe I’ve been streaming too many musicals lately. Everywhere I go, as I’m walking along, music swells to a crescendo inside my head and my steps fall in time to the beat. On my early morning walk today, with crisp air nipping at my nose, my mind went to *West Side Story*.

*Could be... Who knows?  
There’s something due any day –  
I will know right away,  
Soon as it shows.*

This morning, that seemed like an Advent song. Time to be ready and prepare ourselves for something good. Emotionally and spiritually, I’m so ready for Advent, though my house isn’t ready yet. I have no decorations out. I still need to “Haul out the holly, put up the tree before my spirit falls again.” (Oops. I just changed musicals!) Oh, and I’ve not gotten any presents yet, either. I’ve hardly even

thought about them. So, it's really time for me to prepare. Prepare the way! But as unprepared as I am, I'm appreciating this spirit – the joy and excitement of it all.

It can be easy this time of year, after another election cycle, with economic struggles, and these many long months and years of Covid, to get caught up in being busy, in being worried, or angry, or disappointed, or exhausted. Personally, I need a break from all of that. So that's what I'm choosing. In Advent, *this Advent*, I make the intentional choice to anticipate God's impending blessings and coming joys. And come Christmas, I'm gonna celebrate.

Back to *West Side Story*.

*With a click, with a shock,  
Phone'll jingle, door'll knock,  
Open the latch.*

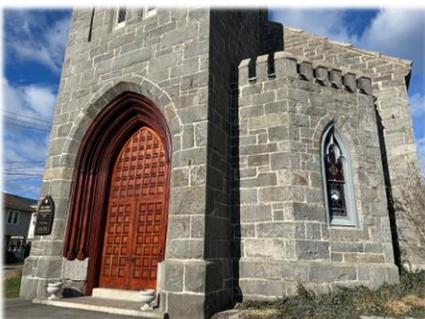
I want to be ready to respond when the moment comes. I want all of us to be ready. When **hope** comes, can we embrace it, allowing it to overshadow our despair? I think we can. When **peace** comes to us, the peace that surpasses all understanding, are we able to let it quell the conflicts and struggles that have become the background noise of our days? I think we are. When **joy** comes, offering to brighten our days and lighten our griefs and burdens, will we take it to heart? I think we will. And when **love** comes, divine love, boundless, eternal love, dare we let it salve and repair the fear, anger, disappointment and hurt that our lives' experiences have brought us? I think we can dare to love. *Will* dare to love. And that love, God's love, love made known in Jesus, will grow inside us day by day, month after month as it becomes our lives' foundation, and our lifestyle.

The birth of Jesus in the manger, so long ago, marked a decisive entry of God into our world and our lives. Mary's child, Bethlehem's babe, that "sweet, little Jesus boy, lying in a manger," would one day grow to teach us of hope, peace, joy and love that can transform our very lives, empowering us to live through whatever might come our way. In inspires us to be a force for Good in the world. And it empowers us to live both now and forever in the embrace of God's boundless, endless love and compassion. That's the true gift of Christmas. It's what we're waiting for. It's what we already have.

*Something's comin', don't know  
When, but it's soon;  
Catch the moon,  
One-handed catch!*

It's Advent, and time for us to prepare ourselves for the coming of boundless love and countless blessings, the gift of God's presence among us. Something's coming! Something good. Really good! And when it does, as it does, our lives and our world will never feel the same.

See you in church.



*(Our newly refinished doors!)*

*~Bill*



# Sunday Morning Worship

10:00 AM

*Hope you will join us!*



*Welcome!*



*Children Time Message*

## *One Sunday Worship held in Parish Hall*



For those who cannot attend in person, worship will continue to be broadcast each Sunday, at 10:00 AM, on Facebook Live ([facebook.com/FirstChurchMethuen](https://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchMethuen)). It will also be posted following the worship service on our YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCfLSjhXs9UG8yC89aB8evrA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfLSjhXs9UG8yC89aB8evrA)).

The service can be viewed at any time on either platform.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ***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 14<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 AM**, at Ellie’s Farmhouse, 436 Broadway, Methuen, MA. And remember, it’s dutch treat!



## Author Talk and Book Signing



Church member and Author Jamie Blanco has published a remarkable book, co-authored with her late father, Jimmy Blanco. *'Hope for the Hopeless'* is the inspiring story of her father's battle against the world's most aggressive and deadly form of brain cancer. Against all odds he managed to live more than 8 years using a purely holistic approach, all the while relying on his deep and unshakable faith. Jimmy began to chronicle his journey but sadly it was never finished. His manuscript was discovered 15 years after his death and passed to Jamie, a writer and award-winning radio news producer.

Jamie has applied her skills to research the alternative treatments that contributed to her father's longevity as well as the latest promising brain tumor clinical trials. She also explores the impact of faith on health and wellbeing, the cornerstone of her father's success for nearly a decade.

Jamie will present her book and share her story following worship on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Her presentation will begin 15 minutes into fellowship.

There will be a Q&A and following the presentation Jamie will be selling and signing copies of her book.

Find her FREE Cancer Resource and learn more about the book here:

[www.hopeforthehopelessbook.com](http://www.hopeforthehopelessbook.com)



# 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.firstchurchmethuen.com) and Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/firstchurchmethuen](http://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](http://www.TheBostonChannel.com), **WHDH (Channel 7)** or **The CW (Channel 56)** for cancellation notifications.



\* \* \* \* \*

## 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](mailto:firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com).*

*Thank you for your continued cooperation.*



# *Rejoice and Come Home...*

## *Advent & Christmas 2022* *First Church Congregational*

*Methuen, MA*

### *Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup>:*

10:00 AM – Worship – *1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent*

### *Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>:*

10:00 AM – Worship – *2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent ~ Communion Sunday*

### *Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>:*

10:00 AM – Worship – *3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent ~ Advent Cantata, Gifts to the Manger*

### *Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>:*

10:00 AM – Worship – *4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent*

### *Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>:*

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

### *Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup>:*

10:00 AM – Worship – *Christmas Sunday ~ Come in your pajamas*

## *Merry Christmas to All!*



Our worship services will be held in person, for a limited number of parishioners! A registration link will be sent out on in the Tuesday and Friday email blasts prior to each service, if you would like to attend in person.

Worship will continue to be broadcast each Sunday, at 10:00 AM, on Facebook Live ([www.facebook.com/FirstChurchMethuen](http://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchMethuen)) and posted after the service on YouTube ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCfLSjhXs9UG8yC89aB8evrA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfLSjhXs9UG8yC89aB8evrA)).



# *Musical Musings*

By the time you read this, I will be finalizing rehearsals and plans for our upcoming Advent Cantata on Sunday, Dec 11<sup>th</sup>. The Cantata this year will be focused on the voices of the prophets, both ancient and modern. We will hear from the ancient prophetic voices of Isaiah, John, the Baptist, Mary and Elizabeth, and the modern prophetic voices of Greta Thunberg, the young climate activist, and Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. Readings and music will help us all to hear in a new way the prophets' visions of truth, change, and peace, and will enable us all to enter more deeply into the spirit of Advent-to prepare a place for Emmanuel to dwell with us. The choir, along with a small vocal ensemble and vocal soloists are all working on some beautiful music, and we will also be joined by the Handbell Choir and instrumentalists. I hope you will mark your calendars and plan to be with us in person. Live streaming is great, but nothing is like experiencing live music in person!

I hope you have noticed the growth and development of our Chancel Choir. Each week, we have been adding new members, and their choral sound just keeps getting more and more beautiful. Pretty soon, if we keep growing (and I'm confident we will!) we will be spilling out of the choir pews! Thank you to all our choir members for the gift of your time, your talent, and your dedication to your ministry.

I'm excited that by the time you read this, Foley Baker will have been in to work on the organ again, with a focus on tuning this great instrument just in time for the Cantata and Christmas. I'm eager to be able to feature the "reeds" again at worship. Stops like the oboe and the trumpet are amazing to hear live, but really need to be in tune in order to be used and appreciated, so thus far, I have been unable to use them at all. Your continued financial support of the Organ Fund enables us to maintain this great instrument that you all have told me you appreciate hearing in worship.

I hope that as you or your children or grandchildren are returning from college for break, you'll consider stopping by to introduce yourself to me and sing in the choir for the week or two that you are home. You are always welcome here....and we'd love to have you join us!

Thank you for making me feel so welcome at First Church. A blessed Advent and Happy and Holy Christmas to all of you!

Peace and all good things,

*Mike Boutin*



# From the Chair of the Church Board...

## Advent (noun), Ad-vent 'ad-vent

### Definition:

- 1: the period beginning four Sundays before Christmas and observed by some Christians as a season of prayer
- 2: a coming into being or use

Greetings all from your Chair of the Church Board! It is Advent once again! The season of joy as we prepare for the birth of our savior! However, as the definition continues, it is also a time of new beginnings. A time to see what's new in the world and celebrate what we can do to be better Christians. So, let's all remember the reason for the season, and continue to bring peace to others.

As always, your church board has been working diligently to make our church better for our congregation and our community. To sum up a portion of all of the wonderful items:

- Our Minister of Music – Mike Boutin – continues to fill our sanctuary with beautiful music. We continue to grow the choir under his superb direction. But there's still room in the choir for singers of all skill level, so come and join in the fun. Also, the singers are not the only one's making music - the First Church Bells choir is back! Under Jim Conner, the hand bells are ringing again and sound lovely. There's room in that choir as well - If you can count, you can play! Practices are Thursday nights, so please speak to Jim Conner if you're interested in joining in the fun.
- The Outreach program "Just Book It!!" collected more than 700 new and used books for a local school. Just amazing! Thank you to all that helped out – a blessing and worthy cause!
- The Stewardship program, "*Forward Together*," wrapped up its annual work with a wonderful luncheon on Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>. If you haven't filled out your pledge card (the postal service wasn't quite on-the-spot with delivering them on time), please send them in. Without your pledge, we couldn't be the church we are today.
- Christian Education is continuing, thanks to our wonderful teachers. Currently, it's on a limited basis, but we can expand if you would like to volunteer. Please see Rev. Bill to help build this great program.
- The Christmas party is on! This December 17<sup>th</sup>, from 4:30-7:00 PM, we will have fun, games, and cocoa for all. Many more details to come!
- ...and so much more!

However, it's not all fun & games, as we have more work to do. With our historic tower repairs complete, the capital campaign is now focused on repairing the water damage to the narthex. The head of the campaign, Steve Boyko, is trying to raise the necessary funds to complete the repairs. The church is driving to get to 100% participation in order to close the financial gap, so please talk to Steve to find out how you can help.

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, continuing to seek God, care for each other, and improve our community.

God bless!!!

*Josh Ferry*

## ***Stewardship Ministry Team...***

We joyfully celebrated the final Sunday of our pledge campaign with a delicious chicken pot pie luncheon on November 6<sup>th</sup>, with thanks to the many helpers who made it happen. Many of you have already faithfully returned your pledge card and we are grateful.

As we move ***Forward Together*** into 2023 let us continue to keep in mind our mission of *Seeking God, Caring for Each Other and Improving our Community*. How will we do this? We have completed repairs to our building's tower and will move forward with renovations to the narthex and sanctuary. We continue to broadcast our worship service, reaching members and friends near and far. Sunday School is starting again and will continue to move forward toward a full weekly program. Many of our social activities have or will be returning – coffee hour, bell choir, and monthly fellowship activities. Outreach activities are growing, including providing food and other necessities to our community.

We continue to receive pledges in the mail each week. If you haven't returned a pledge yet, it is not too late. 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 Stewardship Ministry Team.

Stewardship Ministry Team:

*Kathy Romano – Chairperson*

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

### ***Forward Together***



***Joyfully***



***Faithfully***



***Gratefully***

## From the Outreach Ministry Team

### NIN Tuesday Evening Thanksgiving Food Pantry

On Tuesday, November 22, our NIN Tuesday Evening Thanksgiving Food Pantry provided food for **343 families**. As of that Tuesday morning, we still didn't know whether the food we would receive from NIN would be boxed, bagged or loose, and we would need to bag it. As it turned out, we received food in all those ways. We had a group of 21 volunteers and 5 members of the "Youth Action Committee" from Methuen High School to help us. Everyone did whatever was needed to get the food distributed as quickly as possible.



In addition to the food NIN provided, each family received a \$25.00 gift certificate to buy a turkey or whatever they wanted. NIN and an anonymous NH donor provided pies for each family. A woman and her family, friends of Kim Valcourt, collected \$1,100 and used it to buy food which they brought to the church on Sunday, November 20. A neighbor of Don and Janet Towler gave them several big boxes of Lindt chocolates which they donated to the pantry. We thank our generous church family for all the food they donated. We also received \$1,585 in monetary donations.

### First Church Bra Project

At a community meeting where the needs of the migrant families recently brought to the Days Inn in Methuen were discussed, Pastor Bill volunteered our church to purchase bras for the women in these families. He provided Outreach with the names of 22 First Church women who volunteered to purchase the bras. So, when we received the bra sizes for 25 women on Tuesday, November 15, we were ready to assign sizes to people to purchase those bras. That same day we found out from Linda Soucy, our contact person, that there were still 22 additional women with a need for bras. We volunteered to provide bras for those women too.



Linda gave Outreach a list with an ID number and bra size for each woman for whom we were buying a bra. Outreach divided up the ID numbers by their bra size and assigned them to our 22 volunteers. We asked the volunteers to buy 2 bras, so each woman would have one to wear while she was washing the other one. We also asked each volunteer to purchase bras that week and bring them to church on Sunday, November 20. Our First Church volunteers **purchased 94 bras in 4 days** and had them to the church on Sunday, even though some of the sizes were a challenge to find. We packaged the bras and gave them to Linda Soucy that Sunday. She brought them to the Day's Inn on Monday. The person in charge at Day's Inn was totally surprised, pleased and grateful we got the bras so quickly. We thank the amazing women of First Church for enabling us to so quickly and successful complete this project.

### Gifts to the Manger

There is an article, on the next page, in this issue of *The Beacon* letting you know what we are doing this year for Gifts to the Manger. Please check it out and participate in this gift giving for the children at MAN, the Methuen Arlington Neighborhood.





# 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 11/27, 12/4 & 12/11, before or after worship (10:00 – 11:00 AM)**
- **Weekdays until 12/9, 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 14<sup>th</sup>, 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 14<sup>th</sup>. 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 still be placed in the crossroads this year, 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.



\* \* \* \* \*



# Walking Group for Fitness and Fellowship

## Tuesdays in December

Bundle up and join us for a brisk walk in the month of December! We will be walking at 10:00 AM on the following Tuesdays: 12/6, 12/13, 12/20 and 12/27, weather permitting. We meet at Raymond Martin Park at 971 Riverside Drive in Methuen. Walk at your own pace for as long as you would like. Hope you can join us!



\* \* \* \* \*

## Sunday Walk on the Methuen Rail Trail

Come join us for our monthly Methuen Rail Trail Walk on Sunday, 12/18 at 12:00 PM. We meet in the back of the MSPCA parking lot where we access the Rail Trail. Don't forget to dress warmly! Hope to see you!



# 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 or Anne Benedix or Carol Gray for more information.

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

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Following the tradition of First Church for its' many outreach programs, the Prayer Shawl Ministry has reached out to Compassus Hospice Care to donate some prayer shawls to their needy patients. Kimberly Iannacci, the Compassus Volunteer Coordinator, recently received a letter from their Chaplain, Susan Nolan, expressing her appreciation for the shawls received from our Prayer Shawl group. The following is the letter from the Chaplain:

*Dear Kim,*

*I have long meant to send you a letter telling you how wonderful and meaningful the prayer shawls are to our patients, and, I should add, how soft and comforting and beautiful they are. Time and again, I bring these shawls to my nursing home patients and I wish I could take photos (cannot because of HIPAA) because each time I deliver one, it is so heartwarming.*

*A recent one, for a woman with cancer and dementia, was particularly precious. When I read the attached prayer from the angels who crochet or knit these blessings, she began to weep and I asked her if she wanted to keep the prayer she said "yes" and she clutched it in her hand when I gave it to her. I don't think she can read it any longer, but her dementia did not rob her of the ability to feel the holy and to understand prayer.*

*The value of these precious shawls is almost indescribable. They give comfort to my dementia patients who are often agitated. I can think of a 92 year old lady who kept stroking the soft shawl over and over again and it seemed so calming to her.*

*In addition, these shawls often bring a sweet touch of color to a sometimes gloomy environment. Some of my patients have no family or friends to visit or bring nice clothing so, for them, the shawls may be the only beautiful piece of clothing they have.*

*My sweet patients are often cold, even in the summer. These shawls are a godsend of warmth. A tiny 89 year old woman who, when I put a shawl around her, hugged herself and smiled at the softness and warmth of the shawl, and began rocking back and forth in her chair.*

*There is no way I can express how grateful I am for these precious shawls. They truly make a difference in the lives of the sweet people who receive them.*

*Please pass on my thanks to those angels.*

*Susan*

# Sewing Group

This is the latest shipment that is going to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. A special thank you to Marge Grant and Anne Bendix for the knitted hats and 2 sweaters. Along with the sewing, I contributed 3 pairs of knit socks. The Sewing Group is always looking for people to help sew. We have plenty of fabric, patterns, thread etc. But are looking for creative people to make it all come together.

~ Carole Silva



\* \* \* \* \*



Original Artwork by Emily Jurovich



# The Chapel School

We just wrapped up Thanksgiving here at Chapel. It was a busy day enjoyed by everyone. The children all marched into the Parish Hall wearing feather headbands, pilgrim bonnets and hats, decorative placemats and they brought their hungry tummies. We feasted on turkey, mashed potatoes, corn, cranberry sauce, and gravy. It was absolutely delicious thanks to chef Pat Romano. He was a tremendous help in organizing our day of feasting. We also invited a few parents to help with setup and clean up in the Hall.

Thankfully we were able to enjoy this traditional feast this year after a two-year hiatus. During Covid we were not able to mix the classroom groupings, and everyone had to eat in the classrooms. We had to simplify the menu to chicken nuggets and smiley fries and ketchup was the new gravy of choice. Not very traditional. The children loved it, but it wasn't quite the same.

The Festival of Trees continues till December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Our tree "Christmas Tree Rex" won *Best Tree Done by Children*. Many Chapel families have been visiting the Festival to see the tree. The children did a great job making ornaments and the parents donated lots of dinosaur games, puzzles, plush, books, and blankets to make two gift baskets to be given to the tree winner. Many thanks to them for supporting our tree.

We are already in Holiday mode preparing one of a kind gifts and treasures for the children to give to their parents. It's busy merriment every day leading up to Santa's arrival. We will all need our long winter's nap after Christmas to rest, regroup and refresh.

The Mitten Tree will be filling up during the month of December. All the donations of mittens, hats, and scarves will once again be delivered to the Methuen Public Schools Family Resource Center. The staff there will distribute the items to children in need of these warm articles of clothing. Working together both First Church and Chapel School help to pay it forward to those who need it the most.

Staying healthy is still the number one priority. Our health is everything. We need to continue to take care of ourselves, eat healthy, get plenty of sleep so that we can all enjoy the Holidays with family and friends. Enjoy these special times!!

*Cindy Mazella*  
Director



**Congratulations to the Chapel School**  
for taking **1<sup>st</sup> Place**  
for **"Best Tree Done by Children"**  
at the **2022 Methuen Festival of Trees!!**



**"Christmas Tree Rex"**

Come see the trees at the Festival through December 3<sup>rd</sup>!  
[www.MethuenFestivalofTrees.com](http://www.MethuenFestivalofTrees.com)

*While at the Festival of Trees, be sure to check out the First Church Congregational tree, “The Son of a Carpenter”, and the tree by Becky Smith, “Head First Into the Holidays”*



# 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 -- Reliable, Engaging, Able, Caring and Heartfelt 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](mailto: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.

\* \* \* \* \*

## *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](http://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 2022 (Year A)

**Thurs., Dec. 1**

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19  
Isaiah 4:2-6  
Acts 1:12-17, 21-26

**Fri., Dec. 2**

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19  
Isaiah 30:19-26  
Acts 13:16-25

**Sat., Dec. 3**

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19  
Isaiah 40:1-11  
John 1:19-28

**Sun., Dec. 4**

*Second Sunday of Advent*  
Isaiah 11:1-10  
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19  
Romans 15:4-13  
Matthew 3:1-12

**Mon., Dec. 5**

Psalm 21  
Isaiah 24:1-16a  
1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

**Tues., Dec. 6**

Psalm 21  
Isaiah 41:14-20  
Romans 15:14-21

**Wed., Dec. 7**

Psalm 21  
Genesis 15:1-18  
Matthew 12:33-37

**Thurs., Dec. 8**

Psalm 146:5-10  
Ruth 1:6-18  
2 Peter 3:1-10

**Fri., Dec. 9**

Psalm 146:5-10  
Ruth 4:13-17  
2 Peter 3:11-18

**Sat., Dec. 10**

Psalm 146:5-10  
1 Samuel 2:1-8  
Luke 3:1-18

**Sun., Dec. 11**

*Third Sunday of Advent*  
Isaiah 35:1-10  
Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke  
1:46b-55  
James 5:7-10  
Matthew 11:2-11

**Mon., Dec. 12**

Psalm 42  
Isaiah 29:17-24  
Acts 5:12-16

**Tues., Dec. 13**

Psalm 42  
Ezekiel 47:1-12  
Jude 17-25

**Wed., Dec. 14**

Psalm 42  
Zechariah 8:1-17  
Matthew 8:14-17, 28-34

**Thurs., Dec. 15**

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
2 Samuel 7:1-17  
Galatians 3:23-29

**Fri., Dec. 16**

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
2 Samuel 7:18-22  
Galatians 4:1-7

**Sat., Dec. 17**

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
2 Samuel 7:23-29  
John 3:31-36

**Sun., Dec. 18**

*Fourth Sunday of Advent*  
Isaiah 7:10-16  
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
Romans 1:1-7  
Matthew 1:18-25

**Mon., Dec. 19**

1 Samuel 2:1-10  
Genesis 17:15-22  
Galatians 4:8-20

**Tues., Dec. 20**

1 Samuel 2:1-10  
Genesis 21:1-21  
Galatians 4:21—5:1

**Wed., Dec. 21**

1 Samuel 2:1-10  
Genesis 37:2-11  
Matthew 1:1-17

**Thurs., Dec. 22**

Luke 1:46b-55  
Isaiah 33:17-22  
Revelation 22:6-7, 18-20

**Fri., Dec. 23**

Luke 1:46b-55  
2 Samuel 7:18, 23-29  
Galatians 3:6-14

**Sat., Dec. 24**

*Christmas Eve*  
Isaiah 9:2-7  
Psalm 96  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

**Sun., Dec. 25**

*Christmas Day*  
Isaiah 52:7-10  
Psalm 98  
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]  
John 1:1-14

**Mon., Dec. 26**

Psalm 148  
Wisdom 4:7-15  
Acts 7:59—8:8

**Tues., Dec. 27**

Psalm 148  
Proverbs 8:22-31  
1 John 5:1-12

**Wed., Dec. 28**

Psalm 148  
Isaiah 49:13-23  
Matthew 18:1-14

**Thurs., Dec. 29**

Psalm 20  
Jeremiah 31:15-22  
Luke 19:41-44

**Fri., Dec. 30**

Psalm 20  
Isaiah 26:1-9  
2 Corinthians 4:16-18

**Sat., Dec. 31**

*New Year's Eve*  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13  
Psalm 8  
Revelation 21:1-6a  
Matthew 25:31-46

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# 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

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## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY

12/9 Irene & Peter Maggio

Married 45 years

## JANUARY ANNIVERSARY

1/6 Robert & Susan Newton

Married 44 years

# December 2022



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Worship Service</b> Sundays at 10:00 AM In-Person & on Facebook Live <a href="http://www.facebook.com/firstchurchmethuen">www.facebook.com/firstchurchmethuen</a>				<b>1</b> 6:30 PM First Church Bells	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent Sunday</b> <b>Communion</b> 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Fellowship Time	<b>5</b> 4:00 PM Chapel Staff 6:30 PM Finance	<b>6</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (Meet at Riverside Park) 4:00 PM Food Pantry 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	<b>7</b> 1:00 PM Prayer Shawl	<b>8</b> 6:30 PM First Church Bells	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11 3<sup>rd</sup> Advent Sunday</b> <b>Advent Cantata</b> Gifts to the Manger 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:15 AM Fellowship Time	<b>12</b> 6:30 PM Outreach	<b>13</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (Meet at Riverside Park) 4:00 PM Food Pantry	<b>14 January 2020</b> <u>BEACON deadline</u> 8:00 AM Breakfast with Bill 1:00 PM Prayer Shawl 7:00 PM Diaconate	<b>15</b> 6:30 PM First Church Bells	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 4:30 - 7:00 PM FCC Christmas Party
<b>18 4<sup>th</sup> Advent Sunday</b> 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Fellowship Time 10:00 AM Walking Group (Methuen Rail Trail)	<b>19</b> 1:00 PM Cook for Bread & Roses 6:30 PM Stewardship	<b>20</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (Meet at Riverside Park) 4:00 PM Food Pantry Christmas Distribution	<b>21</b> 1:00 PM Prayer Shawl	<b>22</b> 6:30 PM First Church Bells	<b>23</b> Chapel School Closes at 11:30 AM	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve 7:00 PM Candlelight Service
<b>25</b> Merry Christmas  11:15 AM Fellowship Time	<b>26</b> Chapel School Closed	<b>27</b> Chapel School Closed 10:00 AM Walking Group (Meet at Riverside Park) 4:00 PM Food Pantry	<b>28</b> Chapel School Closed 1:00 PM Prayer Shawl	<b>29</b> Chapel School Closed 6:30 PM First Church Bells	<b>30</b> Chapel School Closed	<b>31</b>

Dates and times are subject to change

*First Church Congregational*

*United Church of Christ*

*26 Pleasant Street*

*Methuen, MA 01844-3199*

**Address Service Requested**