



# *The Branchline*

*"I am the vine, you are the branches."*

*December 2023*

## *From the Pastor's Desk....*



*"And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant..."*

**The Gospel according to Luke**

Welcome to December,

December has arrived, snow has already fallen and 'Baby it is cold outside!' But that's Ok, because it is warm inside the church, and we are getting ready for the BIG EVENT, which is the coming of light into the world. For those of us in the northern hemisphere, Advent is experienced at the darkest time of the year. It is literal and at the same time very symbolic, for the days ahead are the shortest, and our lives would be dark indeed if it were not for Christ coming in to the world, bearing light to show us the way.

This is a very important time of the year because the celebration of Christ's birth is a central part of our Christian faith. Thus, we must prepare ourselves for the season, and Advent is a time of expectant waiting and preparation. It is both a time of celebration of the birth of Christ, but also anticipation for the return of Christ in the second coming.

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From the Pastor's Desk (continued)

We, as Christian people, prepare ourselves by reaffirming our commitment to God and church, and by realizing the tremendous gift that we have been given because of God's great love for us. We also prepare by taking a closer look at our own spiritual journeys, where we have been and where we want to go on life's path. It is important to reflect and to truly appreciate what the coming of Christ continues to mean to a hurting and needy world.

Let us not be too distracted by the great big party that is going on around us. I know that it is fun and frosty, glittery and all wrapped up, but Christmas is not out THERE, it's in here. It's in our hearts. It's in our church. Christmas is in light and blessing, goodness and graciousness. Christmas is in Christ. That's what Christmas is all about.

Brightest Blessings

Rev Janet



*Happy Birthday*

Ruth Karlson - Dec 13th





## Hello! from the Music Room

### *“Sleigh bells ring,” are you listening?*

Maybe you know the lyrics that follow – something about a ‘sleigh ride together for two...’ Tunes like this play on an endless loop of popular Christmas music, but they are not Christmas songs! You’d find them on the same list of favorites as “White Christmas,” “Jingle Bells,” and “All I Want for Christmas, is You” – all rich in nostalgic images but not found in the hymnody of church music.

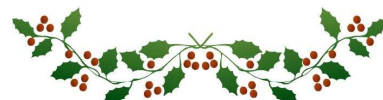
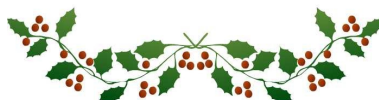
The Advent and Christmas music we encounter in church recites a story about the human longing for God, and God’s longing for humankind. Chances are, few of us could sing “Silent Night” from memory, but when we sing with a congregation, we help each other find the words. There will always be some key phrases or refrains that touch the heart. And, there will be theological depth that’s hard to come by in “All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth.”

True, much of the theology in traditional Christmas carols could use some updating, but there is a depth and beauty in them that’s altogether missing from a song about a red-nosed reindeer or a frosty snowman. Thanks to all our choirs and music-makers who have been working hard to offer the music of faith to the people of God this season! We are grateful for those who gather together, seeking God’s presence.

Blessings to you all as we enter the Advent Season and journey to Christmas.

From the Music Room,

Bobbie



**The Praise Band is in need of a guitarist. Rehearsals are flexible and we hope to play once a month for our church services. If you are interested or know of someone who is interested, please contact Patti Colkos at [tricia30@charter.net](mailto:tricia30@charter.net)**





You never know what surprises are in store during the Moments for Children of All Ages! This is Rev. Janet's retired rooster who came to church on Thanksgiving Sunday. He was a very good rooster!

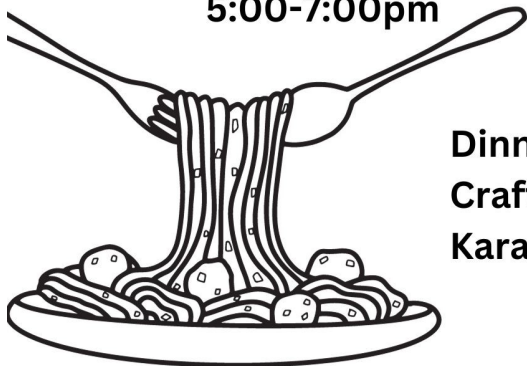




# Spaghetti Supper

Saturday December 16th

5:00-7:00pm



Dinner  
Crafts  
Karaoke

Fellowship Hall  
Wilbraham United Church

## Shopping Card Order Days

*Card orders will be placed on the following dates  
and be available on the Sunday following.*

November 26

December 10

December 17

The December Branchline Deadline is December 28th. Please  
submit items of note to  
[admin@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org](mailto:admin@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org)

  
*The Branchline*  
"I am the vine, you are the branches."



## Charlie Brown Thanksgiving

## Local Solutions Global Impact



Stop by the Heifer International table in Fellowship Hall after worship to find all the ways you can donate this December. Partner with Heifer International and smallholder farmers – especially women farmers – to improve their families' food security and increase their incomes.



## Christmas Pageant

Roles assigned after church December 10th

Practice after church December 17th

Pageant during Morning Worship

December 24th

Members of the Worship team along with Discipleship and Phys Ops teams met to discuss rearranging the sanctuary. The first goal was to allow the handbell tables to be placed on the floor where they could be together, rather than spaced apart in the chancel and to give them more space.



## THE BIG PEW MOVE



The second goal was to find a more permanent location for the streaming table. Two full pews were removed from the sanctuary—one has been re-homed in the old nursery room, the other in the storage room behind the organ. The modesty panel was moved one row back to give the handbells more space. The streaming table was moved behind the modesty panel and the half pew that had been sitting in the Narthex was used to fill the space at the end of the row near the aisle. Here are the before and after pictures!

Thanks to Chris Ryan and friends who came in and did the heavy lifting!





## 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

| Sun   | Mon  | Tue                    | Wed   | Thu   | Fri                    | Sat   |
|---|--|------------------------|---|---|------------------------|---|
| 26  | 27   | 28                     | 29  | 30  | 1                      | 2   |
|   |  |                        |   |   |                        | 10am - Junior Choir (CR)                    |
| 3   | 4  | 5                      | 6   | 7   | 8                      | 9   |
| 10am - Worship<br>11am - Fellowship<br>5pm - AL- Anon -YR   | 10am - Piece Makers<br>6pm - Girl Scouts (Mutti)   | 2pm - Bible Study (ZR) | Cookie Baking (Kitchen)<br>HOLLY FAIR SET UP - FH<br>8:30am - Men's Breakfast<br>11am - Staff Meeting<br>11:30am - Woman's<br>6:30pm - Boy Scouts | HOLLY FAIR SET UP - FH<br>6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR)<br>6:30pm - Bell Small<br>7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc)<br>8pm - Chancel Choir (CR)                       | HOLLY FAIR SET UP - FH | HOLLY FAIR                                  |
| 10  | 11   | 12                     | 13  | 14  | 15                     | 16  |
| 10am - Worship<br>11am - Fellowship<br>5pm - AL- Anon -YR   | 10am - Piece Makers  | 2pm - Bible Study (ZR) | 8:30am - Men's Breakfast<br>11am - Staff Meeting<br>6:30pm - Boy Scouts   | 8am - Wilb Comm<br>6pm - Girl Scouts (Frias)<br>6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR)<br>6:30pm - Bell Small<br>7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc)<br>8pm - Chancel Choir (CR) | 8am - Wilb Comm        | 10am - Junior Choir (CR)<br>5pm - Christmas |
| 17  | 18   | 19                     | 20  | 21  | 22                     | 23  |
| 10am - Worship<br>11am - Fellowship<br>11:30am - Communion<br>12pm - Church Without<br>5pm - AL- Anon -YR | 6:30am - Loaves and<br>10am - Piece Makers<br>5:15pm - Girl Scouts<br>6:30pm - Deacons (Lib)<br>7pm - Church Council | 2pm - Bible Study (ZR) | 8:30am - Men's breakfast<br>11am - Staff Meeting<br>6:30pm - Boy Scouts<br>6:30pm - Discipleship  | 9:20am - Loaves and<br>6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR)<br>6:30pm - Bell Small<br>7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc)<br>8pm - Chancel Choir (CR)                          |                        | 10am - Junior Choir (CR)                    |
| 24  | 25   | 26                     | 27  | 28  | 29                     | 30  |
| 10am - Worship<br>11am - Fellowship<br>7pm - Christmas Eve  |  |                        | 11am - Staff Meeting<br>6:30pm - Boy Scouts   | 6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR)<br>6:30pm - Bell Small<br>7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc)<br>8pm - Chancel Choir (CR)   |                        |   |
| 31  | 1  | 2                      | 3   | 4   | 5                      | 6   |
| 10am - Worship<br>11am - Fellowship   |  |                        |   |   |                        |   |