

Week of December 3, 2023



From Woody: We are in the early days of Advent, a time of preparation for celebrating the birth of the Prince of Peace. As we think about the meaning of this fundamental event in our faith, it is appropriate to ask why do we prepare to celebrate the event in the midst of rising violence via gun deaths in our country and two wars killing thousands of civilians in our world. I guess the easy answer is that there is nothing new under the sun. Wars and murders are a central story of human history. Someone always is killing someone else, sometimes justifying the killing in religious language. The one time in history that the soldiers on both sides stopped the killing was the temporary stopping of World War I by the soldiers on the front lines in 1914 on Christmas Eve. This was not approved by the officers, but the soldiers came out of the foxholes and joined in singing Christmas carols and exchanging gifts of tobacco and candy. It is an amazing story. It fits the spirit of the event we commemorate on Dec. 25 each year.

The story of the birth of Jesus is an extraordinary tale of the coming of God as a baby, born not to earthly royalty but to common (but now we realize amazing) people in a barn. I share with you Frederick Buechner's comment on the beginning of the second chapter of Luke, which identifies Caesar Augustus being the Roman emperor at the time:

Caesar was only one of the titles Augustus bore....He ruled Rome and thus virtually the whole civilized world. He was worshipped as a god. People burned incense to him. Insofar as he is remembered at all, most people remember him mainly because at some point during his reign, in a rundown section of one of one the more obscure imperial provinces, out behind a cheesy motel among cowflops and moldy hay, a child was born to a pair of upcountry rubes you could have sold the Brooklyn Bridge to without even trying.

It is an amazing story and if the world worried more about following the guidance of the man the baby became, we wouldn't hear stories of war on the news on Christmas or ever again.



Joyful Sharing – This year, so far we are sponsoring gifts for over children and youth. We still need people to sponsor wish lists, they are available at the Whipple Free Library during the week, during daytime hours. Donations of cash, checks (made out to CCNB with Joyful Sharing on the memo line) and gift cards are also gratefully accepted. You can sign up for those by clicking on this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D45AFAB2AA5F5CE9-46109243-joyful#/>

Fulfilled wish lists are due back December 10.



Christmas Food Baskets: Christmas food baskets will be distributed on **Saturday, December 16**. We will be collecting food donations on Friday, December 15 from 7:30-9:30am. We'll also be collecting them on Saturday, December 16 from 7:30-8:45am. If you know of a family in need, please reach out to Woody at (603)487-3643. Any questions, please reach out to Colleen Jorczak (603)660-8966 and Kim Borges (603)325-3091. To sign up for food items, go to the website below: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0C4FA4A92DAAFB6-46334420-2023/34952514#/>



Annual Christmas Cookie Walk: Will be having our annual cookie walk after church **December 17 NOTE THE DECEMBER 10 DATE WAS AN ERROR--**. Cost is \$15 for 2 dozen. You will also be entered into a raffle for a cake donated by Shephard Basset of Shephard's Pie Baking Company. **We need more cookie bakers!** If you would like to donate cookies, we are asking for 4 dozen. You can bring them to the church on that Sunday morning. Please include a list of ingredients. Contact Lynn Wawrzniak if you have any questions and/or wish to donate cookies. lwawrzniak@comcast.net.



Christmas Eve poinsettias: To decorate the church on Christmas Eve, we are asking (those who are interested to provide \$12 **(THIS COST IS UP FROM \$10)** for the purchase of a poinsettia. The plants will be used at the Christmas Eve service and then you can take it home to enjoy. Please sign up on the clip board in the church hallway or let Ellen Anderson (andersel@njms.rutgers.edu) know if you want to help. **Sign ups will close Dec. 17th.** Please pay by placing a check or cash in the offering plate clipped to a memo indicating the money is for the flowers.



Christmas Eve Services: Christmas Eve services will be at 7:00 and 11:00. The 7:00 service will be broadcast live on Facebook, YouTube and the church Website.

Our 10 am service on Christmas Eve will be a Carol Sing and will not be broadcast.

Ushers are needed for both services (7 and 11 pm). Contact Woody if you can help.



Peace Quote: . Love your enemy as you love yourself.....Jesus