

WEEKDAY WORDS

Thursday, December 14, 2023

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF THE SEASON SO FAR...

- Dec. 1 (the Painted Turtle day) - It started with a count-down. 3...2...1...and our green became a community display of lights – from the Christmas tree to trumpeting angels to the nativity. The display includes the names of people who have died, but more than names, these are cherished ones who live on in our hearts.
- Dec. 2 (the day of the Muskrat) – After a sumptuous dish-to-pass dinner, the sanctuary was transformed to marvelous seasonal beauty. Trees went up, lights were lit, boughs were fluffed and dropped onto the sides of the balcony. It is breathtaking and holy.
- Dec. 3 (Black Bear day) – Our newest members – Kelley and Kathy added “peace” to the Advent wreath. We missed you, Jack...but we knew you were watching. Welcome - all three of you!
- Dec. 7 (the day of the Chipmunk) – Outside on the green, 25 people gathered to light the first candle of Hanukkah. For these eight days, each evening we begin singing the Hebrew: *Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu*. After lighting the middle candle (called the Shamash) we light the appropriate number of candles per night. Acknowledging a world in deep need, we end by singing “...let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.” May it be so.
- Dec. 10 (Wood Frog day) – Those who worship with us online looked upon a congregation of sheep and shepherds and wise people and angels - even as Mary, Joseph and Jesus ((Amanda McCaslin, Kelly Thomsen & their daughter, Indiana) traveled to Bethlehem. Say it with us: Good News! (GOOD NEWS!) Great Joy! (GREAT JOY!) And can't you just see the angel Gabriel (who looked a lot like David Ford) flinging festive confetti into the air? 11-month-old Reagan Anise McCall captured the day as she helped her mom and her Gibby to light the candle of JOY for Advent.
- Dec. 12 (Little Brown Bat day) – At least 24 people were free on a Tuesday afternoon for tea with Pastor Vicki. The tables were adorned with simple greens and our special teacups or mugs. We told stories and laughed together as we ate a slice of pie (apple, dutch cherry, peach or pecan). Take note, men: Jim and Ron proved that an afternoon tea is not just for women! How good it was to be together and to get to know each other a little better. We'll do it again early in 2024.

Now we look forward to additional times together:

THIS SUNDAY – ADVENT 4

This Sunday Faith Formation begins at 9:30 AM. Our children will go “shopping” by choosing from an array of donations displayed in the RFR. Each youngster will choose a present for their grown-ups, wrapping it up in a gift bag to give on Christmas Day.

During worship, four generations of Luca and Landon Kostuk's family will light the candle of Love on our Advent Wreath. Later we will feast on the music of our choir under the direction of Joseph Ford. The Tioughnioga Ringers, directed by Jan Jeffers will offer two anthems and Andrea Herzog will play the pipe organ. Stick around for coffee hour afterward, provided by Pastor Vicki. If you cannot attend in person, find our worship service live stream on Facebook, YouTube or at www.homercc.com

THIS WEEK

Tuesday Our Trustees will meet at 6:30 in the Board Room.

Thursday December 21 is the day with the fewest hours of sunlight in the entire year. In solidarity with those who experience pain and grief during this season, we will gather at 6:30 PM for a Blue Christmas Service.

NEXT SUNDAY IS CHRISTMAS EVE!

Faith Formation will NOT meet on December 24.

The waiting is over! Join us at 10:30 AM for a family-friendly Celebration of Jesus' birth. Michael the Mouse has agreed to visit during worship. Stick around afterward for a special cupcake coffee hour hosted by the Worship & Music team.

The waiting is over! Tell your friends and neighbors to join us at 7 PM for a very special service of Lessons, Carols, and Candlelight. Our Deacons will greet you at the door as you come to celebrate the mystery of the Word made flesh. Afterward, folks from the Worship & Music team will host a "Family-Tradition Cookies" coffee hour. If you are able, do drop off 2 dozen of your family's favorites by noon on Saturday.

EXPRESSIONS OF GENEROSITY

We are receiving donations to offset the cost of poinsettias. Place your donation in one of the envelopes available at the doors of the sanctuary. Leave it in an offering plate, and then on Christmas Eve, take a flower home with you.

Next Sunday we will receive the last of the UCC's special offerings – this one called the Christmas Fund. It provides relief for clergy and laity who serve God in various capacities within the Church. Envelopes are in the pews.

The latest financial report for the end of November:

Revenue at 11/30/23 - \$222,251.64, 102.35% of budget

Expenses at 11/30/23 - \$213,789.90, 92.48% of budget

As the Deacons and Trustees make plans for ministry next year, we also remind you to return your pledge card for 2024 by the end of December. Your gifts enable our total ministry. It is not overstated to point out that your expressions of generosity change lives.

WHEN YOU PRAY:

When you pray, please include:

...thanksgiving for...

- all the sights and sounds of this first part of December.
- answered prayers – no cancer, a safe and affordable place to live, a work team rewarded with a score of 100, renewing rest, medication that works.
- friends who will listen and who, when most needed, will help.
- some of our volunteers: Anelia, Bry, Daniel, Jan, Linda, Lori, and Paula.
- our staff: Alex, Andrea, Anne, Brian, Buzz, Joe, Mark, Ron, Stef, Vicki.

...Holy Presence with...

- people in grief.
- caregivers, care receivers, and those awaiting the diagnosis.