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The Federated Courier

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December 2019

From the Pastor's Desk

Greetings of Joy and Peace!

The hymn, “*Joy to the World*,” written by Isaac Watts, celebrates 300 years of bringing joy to us as we lift our voices in praise to God. Throughout Advent, we will weave joy into each service: Hopeful Joy, Loving Joy, Unabashed Joy, Peaceful Joy, and Incarnate Joy.

Many questions swirl around in my mind about the world’s current situation and joy:

Can we be joyful when our life is stress filled? Or when things are not going as we had hoped or planned?

Is it right to be joyful when so many people are suffering in the world?

Can we be joyful when our planet is being destroyed as we know it and our country is hesitant to take steps to reduce pollution?

Can joy and peace go together?

These are just a few of my questions. I am sure many of you have some of your own. I am interested in knowing what they are. If you would like to post your questions on our church Facebook page, I would be curious to know what they are and

attempt to address them in worship. Of course, we will sing “*Joy to the World*” at our 5:30 PM Christmas Eve worship.

For Bible study this Advent, we will be using *Light the World* by Amy Jill Levine. Professor Levine is a Biblical scholar at **Vanderbilt** Divinity School and College of Arts and Sciences teaching New Testament and Jewish studies. She is a favorite of our study group. We meet Wednesday mornings at 10:30 AM to noon. It is a wonderful group, which allows for differences of opinions to be shared without any judgement. You are invited to join us.

Our December church schedule is full of offerings to worship God, connect with others, share in outreach and mission, and have some time to experience joy in our lives.

Jesus said, *I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!* (John 15:11 Living Translation)

No matter where you are this season, no matter the situation or circumstance: May you be filled with joy!

In Christ's Love and Light,
Pastor Pat



From the Deacons' Bench

In Australia, where I grew up, we don't celebrate Thanksgiving. I am grateful for the chance to experience it here with you this year, and I'm interested in your traditions. Do you have the habit of speaking out what you are grateful for?

As a human being, it's sometimes too easy to have the glass half empty habit and dwell on things that aren't right or don't go our way.

Wise teacher Richard Rohr says: "Negativity leaves us in a state of victimhood and/or anger; it is immature if we stall there for long."

If I dwell on how dissatisfied I feel, I can make myself really sad and angry! This sort of thinking robs me of joy and of the power to improve the situation.

What a good thing we have the Thanksgiving holiday to nudge us in the right direction and remind us to stay in gratitude.

What are you grateful for?
What do you give thanks for?
Is once a year enough?

I am encouraged our church has a culture of sharing joys. A weekly practice to give thanks and keep our hearts on track.

One way of growing closer to God, and especially if you are going through a hard or sad time, is to find something to be grateful and give thanks for more often, maybe daily – even if all you can think of to be grateful for is your warm bed at night!

When we need God's help, give thanks for it in advance. Know that it is coming. The apostle Paul said: 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with THANKSGIVING, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7, NIV).

Peace and Joy!
Carmel Grant, Deacon

Advent Daily Devotional Booklet

Enclosed you will find our church Advent booklet. Thank you to Jackie Prior, church member, for sharing her original painting of the sheep in the field for our front cover. You might be tempted to sit down and read the booklet all at once, however, I hope that you will contain yourself to read along with each of us daily. Allow the daily scripture and the reflection time to sink into your heart and soul. Hold the writer in your heart and lift prayers for him or her throughout the day. The next day, a new treasure in writing will be shared as we await for the true gift to arrive on Christmas. Thank you to all who shared of themselves to create the booklet. We almost made a full month's worth. Most of all, I hope you enjoy the gift it is meant to be.

Servers for the Month

Deacons

December Hayden Tibbetts

Ushers

12/1 Dave & Karen Anable
12/8 Don & Shirley Facey
12/15 Amy & Dale Varney
12/22 Bill & Lynn Cunningham
12/29 Elaine DeGray & Ellie Green



December Birthdays

Birthday Greetings to the following adult members of our church who celebrate birthdays in December.

Erin Lee	12/01
Sandra Wild	12/03
Stephanie Lemelin-Bliss	12/03
John Germain	12/05
Joyce Libby	12/05
Barbara Powers	12/08
Elaine DeGray	12/14
Shelley Sears	12/15
Brenda Olesuk	12/15
Sharon DeSanti	12/17
Erin Obuchowski	12/25
Florence Munroe	12/29
Russell Streeter	12/30

Anniversaries

Brett & Alison Castellano	12/10
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Sympathy Extended To

Paula Messier in the death of her mother,
Dorothy (Dot) Messier on November 2, 2019.



If you have an announcement to share of a birth, death or long time anniversary, please contact the office.



Prayer Corner



Evie Meacham

Joyce Libby

Peg Stearns

Walter Black Jr.

Julia Winetrout

Gail Banning

Judy Ingle

Ethel

Audrey Burger

Christopher

Barbara Bennett

Carol Darnley

Maggie Waugh

Gwen Wills

Sarah

Lelum

Kayla

Winnie

Winn

Bill Cunningham

Pat Safford

Jackie Prior

Bob Green

Beverly Pease

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship is having a party: Sunday December 15th, at 2:00 PM at Joyce Libby's house, 30 Rock-A-Dundee Rd., Hampden. All church women are welcome to attend. We will be filling cookie bags for our shut-ins followed by a Yankee swap. Please bring 1 ½ dozen cookies and a \$5 gift. There will be no business meeting in December! Joyce is preparing to move in 2020 and would like to create some warm and last memories in her home. Please join us. It will be your gift to Joyce and our pleasure to be in your presence.

Blue Christmas Worship Service

Christmas-

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year--or Is It?

For many people, the holidays are a difficult time of the year.

If you have lost a loved one to death or are separated from someone, for whatever reason, the holidays can be a time of sadness and grief. Still others may feel scattered from the hustle and bustle of the holidays, feeling tired, overwhelmed, worried, and even depressed. It is appropriate to recognize these feelings. We invite you to join us for

Blue Christmas Worship Service

December 17, 2018

5:30 PM

Come and center yourself in the warmth of the sanctuary and this quiet service. Come, be still and know God. You don't have to be holly and jolly to be loved by God. You are accepted just the way you are. Optional time of fellowship with refreshments immediately following service.

FCC Artists and Crafters

Women's Fellowship is seeking items for our Odds and Ends table for the Holiday Bazaar. December 7th is fast approaching!! If you have anything you wish to donate, please drop off at the church office or bring with you to church. Any questions? Contact Karen Anable 413-267-3377. THANKS!

Watercolor Classes in 2020



Watercolor classes are planned for 6 consecutive Saturdays from 12:30pm to 3:30pm starting on February 22nd and ending on March 28th, 2020. The classes with instruction by David Spencer, will be held in Libby Hall for members of the Church and the community as well. Class size will be limited to around 10 to 12 attendees. There will be a cost of \$10 per session to cover class material and some watercolor paint supplies. Contact David Spencer to reserve your spot.

Opportunity to Share

One of our annual projects with the kids and congregation is the Giving Tree. This year we have sponsored 4 children from MaryAnne's kids. MaryAnne's Kids is a special fund established to provide opportunities for children in foster care that would otherwise be unavailable to them, as they are not typically paid for through the State foster care system. This includes Christmas presents for the children. The children have placed ornaments on the Giving Tree in Libby Hall. Each ornament represents an item that is on the child's wish list. If you are able, we encourage you to pick up an ornament, to help provide a child with the Christmas spirit. All items are asked to be returned to the put under the giving tree, un-wrapped with the ornament attached by Dec. 18th. If you have any questions, please see Kristi.

Stewardship Campaign and Financial *Giving*

Thank you to all who have responded with their 2020 pledged amount. Asking a person to pledge does indeed help the church to plan for the next year:

What ministries can the church continue to fund?
Is there enough money to continue with a full-time pastor?
Will we be able to maintain our church building and address some of the needed improvements?
Can we expand our ministries to touch more lives?
How far? How wide?

These are some of the questions church leadership can answer when it knows how much income can be expected in the next year. Income comes from pledges, investment income, fund raisers, etc.

However, pledging is not only for church planning. As Christians we are called to be as generous as God is generous to us. We can never match God's goodness and generosity, but we are called to give back what we feel is acceptable to God- a giving that is not "whatever I have left-over" but what is a line in our budget; giving God of our first fruits. (See Deuteronomy 26 and/or Proverbs 3). We fill out a pledge believing this is a good amount and what we believe we can achieve. However, it is easy to allow our money to go other places during the year. A pledge holds us accountable to God, promising we will strive to maintain what we have committed. (Unless unseen circumstances apply). As we are called to hold one another accountable, this is one way the church helps its people stay aligned with their actions matching their words. If you have not already done so, please prayerfully make your pledge and return them to the church.

New Year's Eve Service- 5:00 PM

Please join us for a service of thanksgiving and praise for 2019 and a blessing upon the New Year. Communion will be celebrated.

Music

The Chancel Choir is rehearsing on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM December 4th and 11th; and Tuesday the 17th. You are invited to join in for the season, one Sunday, or ongoing.

The church has purchased a bell set with hopes of beginning a Children's Bell choir. Rehearsals will begin on December 1st following worship. A few adults might be needed to guide and support the students. Anyone interested should speak with Faith or come to the choir room at that time.

Fellowship Hour

Please sign up in the kitchen to assist with items for coffee hours following worship. While many folks enjoy this time together, it is not fair that only a few members host repeatedly. Please take your turn.

The Sojourner Truth School for Social Change Leadership

The Sojourner Truth School for Social Change Leadership, known as "the Truth School", invites UCC clergy, lay leaders, congregants and churches to attend one, or several, of their free classes in a wide range of movement-building skills. Social change leaders and engaged participants are essential now to grow movements to build just and creative communities and to stop climate collapse.

Upcoming classes include: Cultural Humility and Cross Cultural Communication, Effective Mentoring of Young

People of Color, and Immigrant Stories of Challenge and Success in U.S. Culture .All classes this semester are led by trainers of color or by bi-racial pairs.

For more information, please visit <https://truthschool.org>

2020 Taizé Pilgrimage

July 24th to Aug. 3rd , 2020

Registration Deadline: Jan. 15, 2020

You Are Invited!

All youth and young adults between the ages of 16 and 30 are invited to join a life-changing pilgrimage to Taizé, France, a place which is filled with deep Christian spirituality and broad ecumenism. This week-long experience will be led by Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar.

For more information: <https://www.neumc.org/taizepilgrimage>

A Holiday Poem

by Annebelle Scavuzzo

In our lives we wear out our favorite shoes,
We watch our age grow around us
And we lose people we love,
And while all of that is happening
We are often out on our own
Following a plan that absorbs us...
Sometimes we need to stop
And pay attention
Before our shoes, our age, and the people we love are gone.
It's important to say the things we feel
To those we love and even those we don't.
Wishing you communication, not waiting this Holiday season.

Submitted by Marilyn Connor

Poinsettias for Christmas

The Flower Committee is taking orders for poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary for Christmas.

All poinsettias are \$7.50 each and your order **MUST BE RECEIVED** by **December 9th** to insure you get your preferred color selection.

Please make checks payable to Federated Community Church and leave your order and money at the church office, or mail to Regina Germain, 43 Pinewood Rd, Hampden, MA 01036.

I wish to give my poinsettia with the following message: (to be included in the church bulletin).

Your Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

I have enclosed \$ _____ for _____
Poinsettia plant(s).

Please check color desired: Red (☐) White (☐) Pink (☐)

Plants will be used for decoration on Sunday morning (12/22). They may be picked up after the morning worship service. Plants can be picked up after Christmas Eve. Service (12/24) or those left will then be delivered to shut-ins.

(☐) I will pick up my poinsettia. (☐) Please give my poinsettia to a shut-in.

Celtics Game to Benefit Foster Children



Detroit Pistons @ Boston Celtics

January 15th @ 7:00 pm

TD Garden, Boston
\$55.00 (Bleachers)

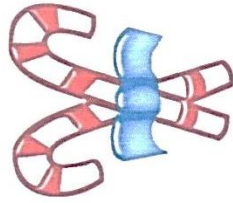
Transportation is available for this event for an extra
cost of \$30.00

A portion of each ticket sold will go to CHD's
MaryAnne's Kids benefitting children in foster care.

For more info, contact
Yamilca Nogue @ 413-781-6556
Or email ynogue@chd.org



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:00 am Silent Worship 10:00am Worship, Sunday School, Nursery	2	3 9:30 am Spirit Chat 6:30/7:30 pm AA	4 10:30 am Bible Study	5	6	7 8:00am- 2:00 pm Holiday Bazaar
8 8:00 am Silent Worship 10:00am Worship, Sunday School, Nursery	9	10 9:30am Spirit Chat 6:30 /7:30 pm AA 7:00 pm Missions Meeting	11 10:30 am Bible Study 12:30 pm Lunch/Afternoon Worship	12 6:00 pm Girl Scouts	13	14 8:00am Men's Breakfast
15 8:00 am Silent Worship 10:00 am Worship, Sunday School, Nursery 2:00 pm Women's Fellowship Party	16	17 9:30am Spirit Chat 5:30 pm Blue Christmas 6:30 /7:30 pm AA	18 10:30 am Bible Study	19 6:00 Girl Scouts	20	21
22 8:00 am Silent Worship 10:00am Worship, Sunday School, Nursery	23	24 5:30pm Christmas Eve Worship 6:30 /7:30 pm AA	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28 8:00 am Men's Breakfast
29 10:00 am Worship, Sunday School, Nursery	30	31 5:00 pm New Year's Eve Service 6:30 /7:30 pm AA				



Annual Holiday Bazaar

Dec 7th 8am-2pm

Federated Church 590 Main St. Hampden

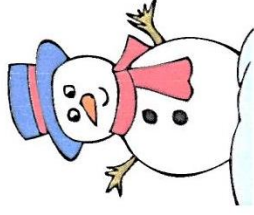
Breakfast with Santa 8-10am

Lunch 11am – 2pm

Raffle & Bake Sale

LOTS OF CRAFTERS & VENDORS

Beaded Jewelry, Bags &
Hats, Painted Stone,
Made Cards, Wood
and so much more.



Purses, Scarves, Knitted
Essential Oils, Hand-
Creations,

*For more information Please contact
Kristi 413-374-8742 or FairsatFCC@gmail.com*