

*The Network... a Publication of
University Presbyterian Church
December 2020*



Message from our Pastor

A Weary World Rejoices

"The thrill of hope, a weary world rejoices" O, Holy Night

Can a person "rejoice" even when they do not feel "happy"? We usually think that one depends upon the other. But could you rejoice without experiencing happiness?

Many of us this Advent and Christmas may not feel very "happy." It has been a hard year—a year filled with innumerable losses, heartaches, divisions, and fears. Life has drained us in so many ways and rather than happiness, many of us may instead feel "weary" in body and in spirit.

But we are not the first people to feel weary because of the burdens of life, the heaviness of our sorrow, or the weight of injustice and cruelty. The Christmas message of scripture proclaims that Christ came to a weary world—and that this coming was cause for *rejoicing*. God enters our lives to accompany us and sustain us in what is often a hard journey, to show us we are loved, and to show us the path to loving others. The Sacred One comes to us and our world with transforming love. And *that* is cause for rejoicing even when life's circumstances do not leave us feeling happy.

We at University Presbyterian Church are saddened that the pandemic means a disruption to many of our traditions this holiday. But the Christmas message remains unchanged: God is with us. And for that we rejoice.

As you celebrate this good news in a weary time of uncertainty and loss, know that we miss you, value you, and pray for you.

May God bless your Advent and Christmas season.

Tracy

Christmas Eve Service

Plans for holding some kind of a Christmas Eve service are in process. The recent rise in Covid cases that resulted in the suspension of in-person worship has required us to adjust initial plans we had for Christmas Eve. Please bear with us as we work to arrange the service in the midst of ever-changing restrictions and conditions. **Our hope is to offer an in-person worship service of some nature at 7 p.m. on Christmas Eve.** If it is not deemed safe to enter the building, we may hold a brief service outside. We will also offer the service online for those at home.

Stay tuned for details regarding Christmas Eve in the upcoming weeks.

Reminder: The church office will be closed on December 24th and 25th and will reopen December 28th. The church office will close for New Years on December 31st and January 1st and will reopen January 4th



Mid-Week Bible Study for December

The poet Mary Oliver writes in her poem *Sometimes*:

Instructions for living a life:

Pay attention.

Be astonished.

Tell about it.

Much of Advent centers on this theme of *attentiveness* to where God is and what God is doing.

The mid-week online Bible study will use some of Mary Oliver's poems as well as the poetry from the Book of Psalms to heighten our attentiveness to the beauty, wonder, and goodness of God's presence. The class will meet Wednesdays, December 2, 9, and 16 at 1 p.m. The link for the class is emailed each week. Everyone is most welcome to attend one or all of the classes!

Worship Column

Sunday, December 6

Second Sunday of Advent

Isa. 40:1-11; Ps. 85:1-2, 8-13

2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

Sunday, December 13

3rd Sunday of Advent

Isa. 61:1-4, 8-11; Ps. 126 or

Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Thess. 5:16-24;

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sunday, December 20

4th Sunday of Advent

2 Sam. 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55 or

Ps. 89:1-4, 19-26; Rom. 16:25-27;

Luke 1:26-38

Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve

Isa. 9:2-7; Ps. 96;

Titus 2:11-14;

Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

Friday, December 25

Nativity of Our Lord/Christmas Day

Dawn: Isa. 62:6-12; Ps. 97; Titus 3:4-7;

Luke 2(1-7) 8-20

Day: Isa. 52:7-10; Ps. 98; Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12);

John 1:1-14

Sunday, December 27

1st Sunday of Christmas

Isa. 61:10-62:3; Ps. 148; Gal 4:4-7;

Luke 2:22-40



What's Happening This December.....



Dec. 1	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
		1:00 pm	Zoom Youth Support Team Mtg.
Dec. 2	Wednesday	1:00 pm	Zoom Bible Study
Dec. 3	Thursday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 6	Sunday	11:00 am	Online Worship Service
Dec. 7	Monday	5:00 pm	Intergenerational Bible Conversation
Dec. 8	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 9	Wednesday	1:00 pm	Zoom Bible Study
Dec. 10	Thursday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 13	Sunday	11:00 am	Online Worship Service
		7:00 pm	Zoom Deacons' Meeting
Dec. 15	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 16	Wednesday	1:00 pm	Zoom Bible Study
		7:00 pm	Zoom Session Meeting
Dec. 17	Thursday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 20	Sunday	11:00 am	Online Worship Service
Dec. 22	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 24	Thursday		<i>Christmas Eve Church Office Closed</i>
		7:00 pm	Worship Service
Dec. 25	Friday		<i>Christmas Day Church Office Closed</i>
Dec. 27	Sunday	11:00 am	Online Worship Service
Dec. 29	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 31	Thursday		<i>New Year's Eve Church Office Closed</i>
Jan. 1	Friday		<i>New Year's Day Church Office Closed</i>





Mission to Community
Alternative Gift Giving
This year's alternative gift is for
RIP MEDICAL DEBT
Collecting to Forgive

Should I pay my medical bill or buy groceries? What about my mortgage or rent? About a third of working Americans have medical debt with almost a third owing at least \$10,000.

You can be part of the cure for crushing medical debt!

Working in the debt-buying industry, Craig Antico and Jerry Ashton were moved by compassion when they met thousands of Americans burdened by un-payable medical bills. They created a unique solution. They used donations to buy large bundles of medical debt and then forgave that debt. Founded in 2014 by these two former debt collections executives, RIP Medical Debt has forgiven more than \$1Billion in medical debt for almost 2 million people.

Beginning Sunday November 29 and throughout Advent you may make your gift to help cure medical debt. With your donation you will receive a card to give to your loved one or friend letting them know you have honored them this holiday with this Alternative Christmas gift of hope. Cards will be available through the church office or you may print a card online.

Every \$1 relieves \$100 in un-payable medical debt- really!

\$10 relieves \$1,000

\$100 relieves \$10,000

\$1,000 relieves \$100,000

Please make checks payable to *University Presbyterian Church, memo: Alternative Gift*



We invite you to learn more at: <https://ripmedicaldebt.org>

Make a wish on your December birthday...



- 6 Jim Moran
- 9 Bob Dewitz
- 9 Dannish Patel
- 12 Eric Moodie
- 15 Bonnie Dahl
- 19 Elizabeth Ball
- 20 John Maddock
- 25 Nikki Malkowski
- 26 Arjun Singh
- 28 Ajay Singh
- 30 Abigail Wadkins-Daub
- 31 Tiffany Whitefield



Is your pledge up to date??

December is the time of year when we look back over our shoulder at the year that has unfolded. Much of the past year has been spent in quarantine due to Covid-19.

Unfortunately even though you weren't able to be out and about, your bills, like rent, insurance, utilities, internet, still have to be paid. And so it is with the church. Have you kept your pledge up to date?

There is still time to take care of that!

Chancel Flowers

If you have someone you would like to honor or a loved one to be remembered and would like to place 2021 chancel flowers please contact the church office .

A Prayer for Putting on a Face Mask

Creator God, as I prepare to go into the world, help me to see the sacramental nature of wearing of this cloth. Let it be a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbors, as I love myself.

Christ Jesus, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart, that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes. Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly, not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully and caringly to all those I meet. May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner, and may each breath that it holds, be filled with Your love. In Your name and in the love, I pray. Amen

Rev. Richard Bott, Moderator
The United Church in Canada

