



WOODBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

4 Church Street
Woodbury, CT 06798

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Rev. John A. Thomason, Pastor

Woodbury United Methodist Messenger

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Advent Prayer Vigil



Thursday, December 17

7:00 – 7:10 PM in the enclosed courtyard on Main Street

7:15 – 7:45 PM in the sanctuary

Also livestreamed from the WUMC website

See Pastor John's 12/11 "Life of the Church" article for additional details.

PLEASE NOTE:

In the event of inclement weather on December 17, the Prayer Vigil will be postponed until a weeknight prior to New Year's Day.

Please Join Us for Livestreamed Worship Events

Livestreaming provides an opportunity for all of us to experience worship at the same time, either at home or in-person. Worshipers at home may join us by video on YouTube or audio-only by telephone broadcast. Video recordings of services will also be available for later viewing. Later phone broadcasts will no longer be provided.

The options for accessing services electronically remain the same:

- **Video:** Go to <http://www.woodburyumc.net>, scroll to "Sunday Morning Worship in the Sanctuary" and click the link for livestreaming. A link is also provided for archived videos for later viewing.
- **Audio only by phone:** dial 425-436-6391, enter pin with hash sign 2431819#. Note that these numbers have changed from what was previously used. Please mute your phones to eliminate background noise.

December 20: Fourth Sunday of Advent



Advent Candle Theme: *LOVE*

Pastor's Sermon: "Born of the Prophet Mary"

**Lectionary Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38**

Liturgist: Rod Carnes Advent Candle Lighter: Zachary Cordova

Musicians: Matt Bodwell, Rod Carnes, Kate Keeler

Children's Time: *Come to the Manger: Love for Advent*, from SkitGuys

Led by Morgan Phillippe, Grace Walkup, Anna Walkup

Thank You from the Church Staff!

In last Sunday's worship service, *Carolyn Shay* and *Sherry Swanhall* presented Christmas monetary gifts to the church staff on behalf of the congregation. Those of you watching at home may not have been able to hear their remarks or understand what was happening, but their comments were as gracious and generous as the gifts themselves. THANK YOU for affirming our partnership in ministry and remembering us in such a tangible way. We are honored to serve the Woodbury United Methodist Church! Blessed Advent and Christmas to each one of you.

Kathy Craig, Chris Shay, and John Thomason

Luminaries for your home!

If you will not be attending the Christmas Eve service, but would like to have a couple of luminaries for your home for Christmas Eve, the sacks and candles (you will have to provide your own sand) will be available for pick up between the hours of 10 am – 2 pm on Wed. (12/23) and Thurs. (12/24). There will be a limited amount located on the church office front porch.

If you have any questions or would like them delivered, please contact the church office (woodburyumc.net) or Venetia Phillippe (morgansmom71@gmail.com) before Wednesday (12/23). Venetia will be delivering these on Wednesday (12/23). We hope these luminaries light your way into 2021. (Please see the article at the end of this Messenger honoring our own past church member, *Sasha Dickenson*, who was responsible for starting this project in the area.)

Thursday, December 24: Christmas Eve

One service only: 6:00 PM in the sanctuary

**Also livestreamed on the WUMC website
and archived for later viewing**



Advent Bible Study Fellowship for Adults

The Advent study series based on the book *Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience*, concludes next Tuesday, December 22, at 6:30 PM. An in-person gathering is offered in Fellowship Hall. Persons may also participate by Zoom. Simply go to the WUMC website and click the link provided, allowing you to join the live group either by video or phone. Study guides and devotional books are still available in the church office. Thanks to *Bud Behlman* for leading the study and using his technical skill to make it accessible to people at home.

Stewardship Opportunities

Our members have received a mailing from Pastor John about a different kind of stewardship emphasis during this very different kind of year. A commitment card was enclosed requesting an indication of your financial support for WUMC during the upcoming year (regular pledge, special giving to pay down the church's mortgage, and giving to the COVID-19 Support Fund), as well as an invitation to participate in the new **Helping Hands** ministry to our community. Your prompt response would be very helpful. Please mail your card to the church office if you are unable to attend in-person worship. Thank you in advance for your spirit of generosity and service.

A Reminder about our Special COVID-19 Support Fund

The Church Council has created a support fund to assist persons who have been severely impacted by the economic shutdown related to the pandemic.

- If you **need financial assistance**, please contact Pastor John (845-707-5152). Requests and donations will be kept strictly confidential.
 - If you would like to **make a donation** to the fund, you can mail a check to the church office (write "COVID-19 Support Fund" on the memo line); or you can donate online through the Breeze link on our church's website (write "COVID-19 Support Fund" in the message box). Thank you!
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Flower Opportunities

There is an opportunity for someone to decorate our altar area with flowers in the name of a loved one for the New Year. Our new floral chart is here and you can reserve a date by emailing or calling the office. Don't have a special occasion? You could donate and ask us to deliver the flowers to one of our homebound members if you'd like. The cost is \$30 and can be paid on line, dropped in the Sunday offering plate or a check can be mailed into the office. Please contact Kathy if you are interested in a particular date for your offering.

Next week's Messenger will feature our Christmas poinsettia acknowledgements. If you are not attending Christmas Eve service; please contact *Venetia Phillippe* by cell @ (918) 706-2637 or by email: (morgansmom71@gmail.com) to arrange a pick up or delivery time of your poinsettia.

Children & Youth Ministry

@ HOME RESOURCES for continued Christian Education

- <https://www.cokesburykids.com/free-resources>
- <https://www.nyac.com/childrensministries>
- Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38 The Birth of Jesus Foretold

Children & Youth Ministry Programming

- Sunday, 12/20 Confirmation Class [at 6:30 pm](#). A special thanks goes out to *Jay Hockenberry* and *Bud Behlman* for providing our Confirmands with the history of the Woodbury United Methodist Church last Sunday night.
- If you haven't already done so, feel free to pick up the last Advent in a bag Sunday school series bags in the church office. Before you open bag four on Sunday, watch Jessie's Sunday school video on the WUMC Facebook page on the theme of LOVE. Don't forget to light the fourth candle of your own advent wreath. Enjoy the crafts and items in the bag. If you finished the picture of JOY, don't forget to send Meg a picture of it!

Kudo Korner

In last week's *Messenger*, we offered Kudos to current members of our COVID Recovery Team who continue to provide for safe in-person gatherings. This week, we want to recognize others who have made contributions to the re-opening of our church building. *Kathy Craig* ordered PPE and cleaning supplies; *Jeff Hunt* developed a ventilation plan for the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall; *Alan Rego* reviewed our risk management plan; and *Theron Kissinger* coordinated the cleaning/sanitizing of our entire facility and built the plexiglass shields for worship leaders in the chancel. **Thank you** to each of these faithful and skilled volunteers!

Congratulations to *Morgan Phillippe* who made it to CT Music Educators' Association regionals and qualifies for states in vocals. Morgan was just notified today and was overjoyed with the news! Way to go Morgan!

Thanks to last Sunday's worship leaders: *Levi Phillippe*, liturgist; *Cody Cordova*, Advent candle lighter; *Venetia Phillippe*, lead singer; *Matt Bodwell* and *Kate Keeler*, assisting musicians; *Caroline*, *Annabelle*, and *Jack Cloud*, and *Liam McGrath*, Children's Time.

The Prayer Corner:

Please remember persons in our church family who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are recovering at home: *Travis and Abby Cloud*; *Toby, Ed*, and *Liam McGrath*; *Grace Bower Richardson*.

Please remember our Confirmands: *Cody Cordova*, *Zachary Cordova*, *James Levario*, *Matthew Shupenis*; their adult leaders: *Catherine Mason*, *Meg Temple*, *John Thomason*; and their mentors: *Mike Boisseau*, *Mollie Cole*, *Rev. Paul Hibbard*, *Carolyn Shay*.

Outpatient tests: *Bob Asman*, *Dave Brencher*

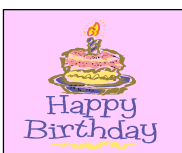
Upcoming chemotherapy and surgery: *Mary Wilkins*, sister of *Barb Hunt* (Rochester, NY)

Recovering at home: *Gary McClendon*; *Ally Roche*; *Steve Thomas*; *Carol Hennessey*; *Paige LeBlanc*, mother of *Jessie Lynch* (Manchester, CT); *Dominic Vaiuso*, father of *Karen Williams* (Newtown); *Robert Ayers*, father of *Tacy Nettleton* (Woodstock, GA); *Carl Hinkle*, father of *Toby McGrath* (Greensburg, PA); *Donna Louise Burke*, friend of *Kathy Craig*; *Peter Gallagher*, father of *Jen Carnes* (Brookfield, CT); *Lou Calabrese* (husband of *Lynn Ramsden-Calabrese*); *Jane King*, mother of *Stephen King* and mother-in-law of *Joann King* (Sarasota, FL); *Antonio Stillitano*, grandson of *Paul Hatch*

Outpatient treatments: *Jackie and John Fleming*; *Dave Davison*, father-in-law of *Gary McClendon*; *Stephanie Galaburri*, friend of *Sandy Carbonaro*; *Will Styblo*, nephew of *Jim Styblo* and *Catherine Mason* (Franklin, TN)

Homebound members: *Florence Brown*, *Linda Bailey*

Please continue to remember: relatives of *Rev. Betty Lines* who are seriously ill: niece *Sharon Parish* (hospice care in Idaho); and brother-in-law *Stephen Lines* (recovering from a stroke in Florida); *Jean Lilly*, mother of *Meg Temple* (Cincinnati, OH), *Manny Gesh*, *Jane True*, *Blair Feller*, *Marilyn Bender*, *Ryan DeRidder and family*, *Laura & Stuart Brush*, *Janet Grant* (sister of *Betty Lines*).



If you would like to send someone a birthday card, please see our website @ www.woodburyumc.net for this month's birthday listing. Reminder that we are placing flowers on the altar again so let us know if you want to sign up for a particular date.

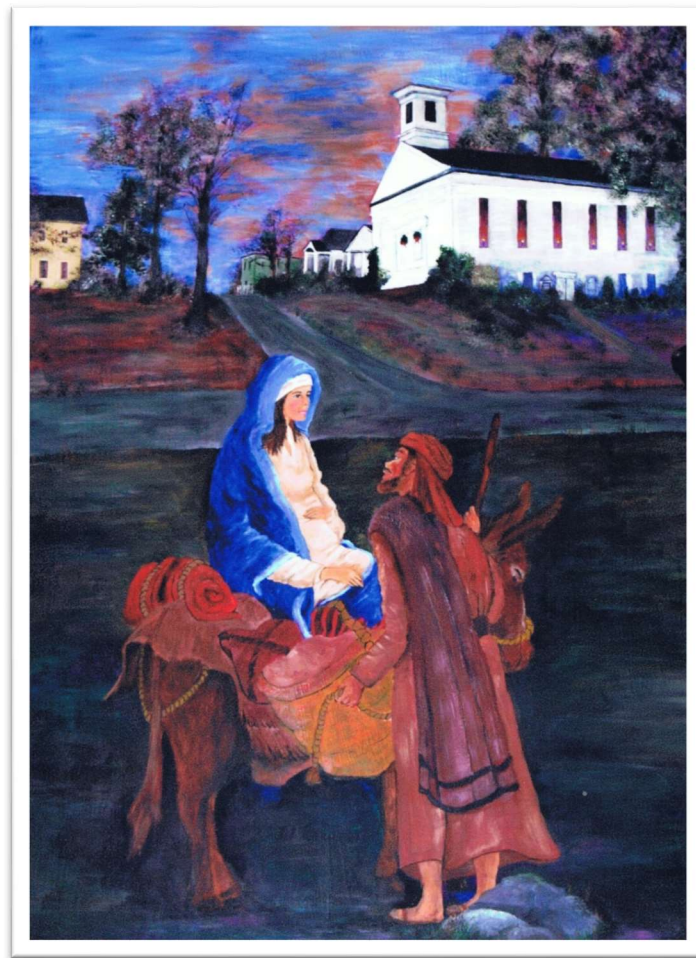
HOUSEKEEPING NOTES FROM THE OFFICE...

HANDICAPPED PARKING - - these are the three spaces outside the office doors (Church Street Entrance). **Please do NOT** park there unless you have a handicapped parking tag. **If you do park there, please be sure to leave enough room for the people using the handicapped ramp.**

- ❖ **Office Hours Tuesday thru Friday 9 am – 3 pm.** During the COVID-19 LOCKDOWN – Office visits are by appointment only. Please be sure to have your face covered if entering the building for everyone's health safety. The answering machine will be checked daily; however, if you have a pastoral emergency, you can call Pastor John Thomason @ (203) 263-7575. Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION UPDATES???

Please continue to send any changes in names, addresses, phone numbers, emails, etc. Please send them to wumc@woodburymc.net. This is also important to keep track of any of our college students as well!!!



Thank you to *Dawn Brownell* for her donation of an oil painting created a number of years ago while her and husband Tom were in Woodbury, CT



THE STORY OF THE CANDY CANE

Legend has it that in 1670, the choirmaster at the Cologne Cathedral in Germany handed out sugar sticks among his young singers to keep them quiet during the long Living Creche ceremony. In honor of the occasion, he had the candies bent into shepherds' crooks.

In 1847, a German-Swedish immigrant named August Imgard of Wooster, Ohio, decorated a small blue spruce with paper ornaments and **candy canes**. It wasn't until the turn of the century that the red and white stripes and peppermint flavors became the norm.

In Indiana, a candy maker wanted to make a candy that could be a reminder of Jesus Christ, so he made the Christmas **candy cane**. He started off with a stick of pure white hard candy. The white color symbolized the virgin birth and the sinless nature of Jesus, and the hard candy symbolized the solid rock which was the foundation of the church, and firmness of the promises of God.

The candy maker made the candy in the form of a J, which represented the name of Jesus and the staff of the Good Shepherds. He then stained it with three stripes which showed the scourging Jesus received, and symbolized the blood shed by Christ on the cross. When you break the cane, it reminds us that Jesus' body was broken for us.

SITE TO BEHOLD ON CHRISTMAS EVE

HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN?

Anyone traveling through Woodbury on Christmas Eve can't help but feel an awesome glow as they pass through miles of ethereal "lights" lining each side of Main Street.

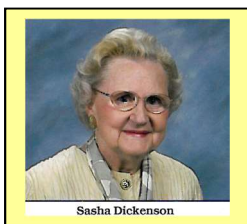
The tradition of luminaries dates back many centuries and has been used predominantly in the Southwest of the United States as a means of illumination to guide the Christ Child on Christmas Eve.

These "Christmas Fires" were originally small bon fires made of criss-crossed stacked pinion logs, a nut pine indigenous to the western United States and Mexico. But how did this tradition come to Woodbury? The truth should be known; the truth should be shared.

One of this church's members, Sasha Dickenson, now passed on, was very instrumental in starting this tradition. While living in Trumbull, CT for years Sasha kept an illustrated article on luminaries she saw in a Better Homes and Garden magazine vowing one day to line her driveway with them. Initially she used the idea in 1977 to grace the circular driveway and walkways of the Nichols Church where she was then a member. This was the year President Nixon banned unnecessary use of outside electricity. The Dickenson's eventually used 144 luminarias to line their driveway on Christmas Eve and continued to do so for the remainder of the years they lived in Trumbull. The beauty of these "lights" quickly spread throughout the Village of Nichols and thousands of these lights were displayed throughout Trumbull.

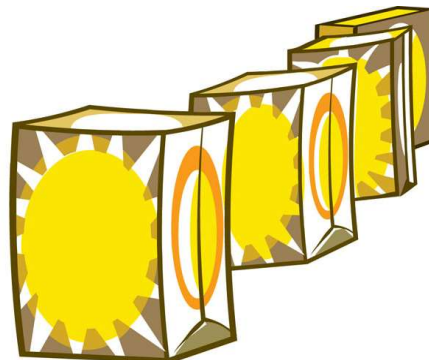
The luminaria tradition was brought to Woodbury in 1986 when luminaries once again lined the walkways of this church. And as you know, the Lions Club of Woodbury eventually picked up on the idea and for many years has been responsible for setting up the luminaries that grace Woodbury's streets on Christmas Eve.

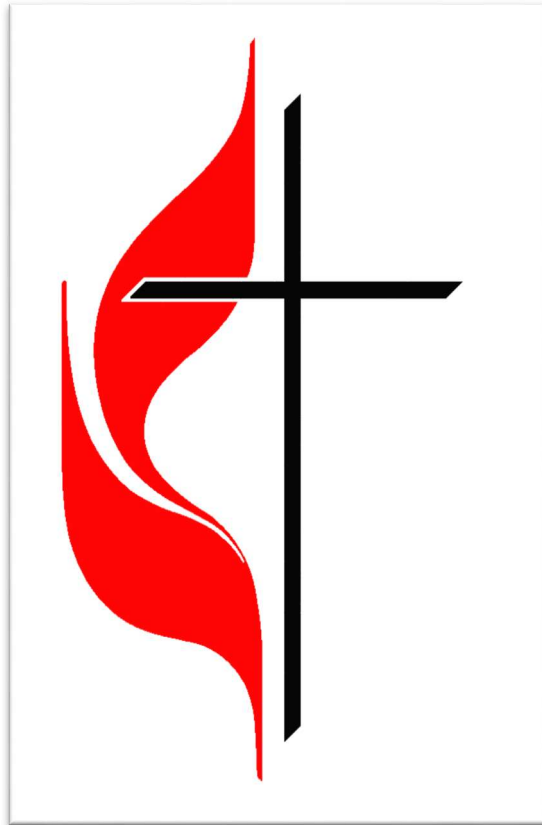
Over the years neighboring towns have incorporated the idea and now luminaries can be seen Christmas Eve in many towns and villages in Connecticut and to think it all began with our *own Sasha Dickenson* and we continue to light the way in her memory.



Lighting the way thru Woodbury . . .

(Sasha's photo taken from 2005 church directory)





Mission Statement of the Woodbury United Methodist Church

We are a welcoming Christian fellowship who celebrate and share God's love with everyone.

We seek a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. Inspired by His example,
we strive to be God's hands in this world.

Empowered by God's word, we proclaim the Gospel and serve through worship, study, mission,
and community support.

Love is Spoken Here!