



DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Pastor Rosemary Captain

To answer your first question, no, we will not have a Christmas Eve Service in the sanctuary this year. What we will have is a recorded youtube video of the service that you can watch at your convenience.

Your Worship Ministry Team is preparing some very special Christmas gifts for you.

We hope you will enjoy!



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Last week was the Thanksgiving Holiday and the health professionals were urging people to stay home and celebrate only with your household. Yet the airports were packed with people who just **HAD** to be with their extended family. Newscasters interviewed some of the travelers and they said things like, “I’ve never missed Thanksgiving at my mama’s. I just have to be there on Thursday.”

I was reflecting on my own life and how many times I was **not** home for Christmas or Thanksgiving or New Years’ Eve or Easter. Once I graduated from high school and entered nursing school, I was working every holiday. I especially remember my first Thanksgiving in nursing school when I had to take my patient to the morgue. Needless to say, I was doing things my friends back home who went to college and attending parties, never would imagine.

After nursing school, I started working at the hospital as an RN, but as the newbie on the floor, worked all the holidays plus nights, evenings, and weekends. Then I entered the US Navy and served at the Newport Navy Hospital in Newport, Rhode Island. That’s about a thousand miles from my parents in Mascoutah. Once again, I never had the opportunity to come home for holidays. I remember one Christmas I was working the night shift but instead of sleeping all day, I had lots of laundry to do. So, I went to the nearest mini-mall laundromat off base. I was there by myself when a very nice police officer came by and said hello. He was walking his beat and checking that I was safe. He was also a newbie as a police officer, working the holidays. We chatted for a while and he actually invited me to his mother’s house for supper, but I had to decline since I needed to rest before my next shift. Two years later I was in Pensacola Naval Base with my husband who was stationed there. We didn’t get home that holiday either.

The point is that these holidays don’t last only one day. Being with family can happen any day of the year when you can be together. And again this year, many of us will follow the advice of the medical experts and stay home. But just as in a laundromat on Christmas, Baby Jesus comes anyway.

I decided to compare the experiences of Mary and Joseph and our experiences this year.

No tinsel, no turkey; no room at the Inn
No parties, no pageants; no bed and no crib
No singing, no caroling; no doctor, no midwife
No visits or seeing grandma; no diapers, no onesies
No bright tree, no gifts underneath;
No baby shower, no water to bath him

Yet knowing it's Christmas, knowing he came
Knowing he was born on this very night
We know God is with us, changing darkness to light
Something is different because of this night
Wherever you are, in church or at home
With no fanfare, no fuss;
A child was born and he came just for us.

Merry Christmas every day. Pastor R.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

12/3 Rosemary Williams	12/15 Marilyn Paul
12/3 Gene Ganschietz	12/15 Aaron Drake
12/6 Abbey Cohlmeier	12/16 Becky Ballard
12/6 Wyatt Vance	12/20 Emily Whitaker
12/14 Barron Arbeiter	12/26 Abby Stewart
12/14 Jakob Arbeiter	12/30 Pat Bregen

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:

12/1 Carol & Terry Randle #54
12/12 Eileen & Jack Gammon #50
12/19 Nancy & Jim Eisenhower #50



PRAYER LIST: Rich Schmitt, Nelson Libell, Dave Seneczyn, Eric White, Lori Riess, Donna Isselhard, Mitch Nallie, Candy Peace, Greg Talley, Carol Meyer, Leah Williams, Pat Holtgrave, Jane Riess, Shari Hamilton, Charlotte Watson, Becky Ballard, Amy Annis.

(If you know of someone's name which can be removed from this list, please let the secretary know.)

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS THAT WE CAN'T VISIT THIS YEAR:

Ardella Morris
1201 Hartman Lane Apt. 235

Belleville, IL 62221

Darlene Bax
220 Fieldcrossing Drive Apt. 40
Highland, IL 62249

Terry Kissel
429 South Main Street Room 228
Shiloh, IL 62269

Jeanette Brown
5904 Perrin Road
Fairview Heights, IL 62208



MEMORIALS:

For Betty Hayes: Pam Bierman and family, Ron & Barb Bright

EVENING CIRCLE:

Sadly, we will not have Church services until at least January. Carol Bulva and I thought it would be best not to plan a meeting until sometime in February. Keep your December Bake Sale envelope for our February meeting. A bake less bake sale is good any time of the year. I am pleased to say our "Thank Offering" of \$95.00 was collected for OCWM!

I am still planning to take Christmas presents to KinderCottage for Athena Hamad. Dec. 6th was the date to get presents to church. If you still want to donate a present; just give me a call (Eileen Gammon).and we can make arrangements.

As we stay safely apart, maybe we will all telephone more people to stay connected during this Christmas season. Christmas is the season to celebrate the birth of Jesus and that does not change.





“What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise man I would do my part, yet what can I give Him: Give my heart.”

Christina G. Rossetti



May your Christmas be filled with LOVE and JOY!!!

Eileen Gammon, Co-Chair

Advent Candle Ritual

Making an Advent wreath

Materials: real or artificial evergreen branches, or green garland; five candle holders; four blue candles, or three purple candles and one pink candle; one white candle

1. Form the branches or garland into a circle (symbolizing God's love which never ends).
2. Place the four coloured candles in a circle evenly spaced around the wreath.
3. Place the white candle (Christ candle) in the middle.



A liturgy for lighting the candles each week can be found in the worship bulletin we will be sending out each week.

Advent at Home

Travelling Nativity

Try setting up your nativity scene in stages this year:

- move the Mary and Joseph figures on a journey through the house until Christmas Eve, when they arrive at the manger
- add angel figures beside the manger on Christmas Eve
- place the baby Jesus figure in the manger on Christmas morning
- add the figures of the shepherds later on Christmas Day
- keep the nativity scene for the twelve days of Christmas
- have the magi figures travel through the house from Christmas Day until the Day of the Epiphany (January 6)
- place the magi figures beside the baby Jesus on the Day of the Epiphany.

Advent surprise gifts

There is a German tradition of secret gift giving during the Advent season, called "christkindl" (Christ child):

- write the name of each member of the family on a slip of paper
- each person chooses a name (without telling who it is) on the first Sunday of Advent
- throughout Advent each person does secret "good deeds" for the person whose name they drew (such as helping with a task without being asked, making a small gift, leaving a note or poem on a pillow or in a pocket)
- reveal the names on Christmas Eve or Day and celebrate the gifts each has received.

Advent bookmark

Make a bookmark to remind you of the Advent Bible stories. Cut out the bookmark, colour it, and glue it to heavier paper.



Advent Bible stories

Stories of events that happened before Jesus' birth

Elizabeth and Zechariah
Luke 1:5-25

The birth of John the Baptizer
Luke 1:57-80

Mary and the angel
Luke 1:26-38

Mary and Elizabeth
Luke 1:39-56

Joseph's dream
Matthew 1:18-24



December

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Bible Study at 7 pm	2	3 AA Meeting	4	5
6 No in-person worship. Worship materials available via email, website, and US mail	7	8 Bible Study at 7 pm	9 Church Council at 7 pm Via Zoom	10 AA Meeting	11	12
13 No in-person worship. Worship materials available via email, website, and US mail	14	15 Bible Study at 7 pm	16	17 AA Meeting	18	19
20 No in-person worship. Worship materials available via email, website, and US mail	21	22 Bible Study at 7 pm	23 YouTube video will be released for Christmas Eve	24	25	26
27 No in-person worship. Worship materials available via email, website, and US mail	28	29 Bible Study at 7 pm	30	31		

