





Dear Friends.

It's that time of year again, when we light the Advent Wreath and prepare our hearts as we wait and prepare for the second coming of Christ. That's right, in the life of the church  $\sim$  the four weeks leading up to Christmas Day is at odds with the way the rest of the world lives. The season of Advent invites us to slow down, turn away from the hustle and bustle of this time of year, and allow ourselves to enter into the quiet stillness, to reflect upon what really matters in our lives! Advent beckons us to spend "quiet" time in reflection to ponder and pray with the scriptures. The season of Advent marks the beginning of a new church year, and a season of waiting and preparation designed to cultivate our awareness of God's actions ~ past, present, and future. During Advent we hear the prophecies of the Messiah's coming as addressed to us ~ people who wait for the second coming. During Advent we heighten our anticipation for the ultimate fulfillment of all Old Testament promises ~ when the wolf will lie down with the lamb, death will be swallowed up, and every tear will be wiped away!

But no one ever said that waiting is easy, especially when so many people around the world are struggling. This month lay readers will light our advent candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love  $\sim$  to remind us of God's ancient promises. The children will take part in the Children's Christmas Program on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> by serving as greeters, ushers, worship assistants, and lay readers. After worship, the church will host a luncheon before everyone is invited to join us for the children's Christmas Party!

For some, this time of year is very challenging. This is especially true for those wrestling with depression or serious illness, or struggling to cope with the death or the serious illness of a loved one, the ending of an important relationship, or other life crisis or disappointment. In times like these, I find it helpful to remember how the birth of the baby Jesus was surrounded by less than ideal circumstances! Recalling the story of Jesus' birth helps me to see how God seeks to break in to our midst just when there seems to be no way forward, in order to make a difference in the world! God seeks to draw near to us during times of struggle and loss. During the darkest time of the year, when some of us find ourselves pleading and calling out to God ~ we need most to be reminded of God's ancient promises: Love is on the Way! This year the church will host a special **Blue Christmas Service** of Grief and Remembrance on Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM for those struggling to cope with the holidays. Please help to spread the word to anyone who might benefit from this service. All are welcome.

I hope you will join us in worship this month, as we light the Advent candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love! Come and listen for the voice calling from the wilderness, reminding us to 'Prepare the way for the Lord!' Allow yourselves the opportunity to enter into the Scriptures and imagine and wonder about what God might be seeking to bring forth in your life ~ and in the life of this congregation! Listen to the choir lift their voices in song, seeking to stir and awaken our sense of God's call and purpose in our lives! Join us as we stand watch with the shepherds, listen for angels, hear Mary's song, and look for the star that shines brightly over Bethlehem!

Join us as we celebrate the birth of the baby Christ child on Christmas Eve. Since Christmas Eve is a Sunday, this year will host a family friendly intergenerational Service at 10 am and our traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols at 6:00 pm. The church will be closed for Christmas day to allow everyone to spend the day with their families. On New Year's Eve, the Church will host a Keeping Watch Service at 10 am.

Wishing you a Blessed Advent and Christmas!

**Pastor Debbie** 

### **Poem for Advent** by Mary Hanrahan

We must prepare a way. Try to straighten paths made crooked by our selfishness and compulsions.

We have forgotten the grace-filled room, the angel's message, 'Do not fear." We fear the very joy he promised.

We are afraid of the journey, the hard road, the bitter cold and the doors slammed in our faces.

We are terrified of giving birth.

Yet within us there is such a thirst for innocence.

We must enter our hearts' dark stable, clear away the dirty straw of resentment and pride, soil our hands and make some effort to find a fresher, sweeter hay of welcome, light a candle of hope, as we humbly await the birth of Wonder.

Sunday, December 3 - The First Sunday of Advent - 10:00 AM A Service of Worship and Holy Communion Sermon Title: Keep Awake Text: Mark 13:24-17

Sunday, December 10 - The Second Sunday of Advent - 10:00 AM Children's Christmas Program-Children will help to lead Worship Sermon Title: Prepare the Way Text: Mark 1:1-8

Sunday, December 13 - Blue Christmas Service of Hope and Healing - 07:00 PM For those who may be suffering form loss or having difficulty with the Holidays.

**Sunday, December 17** - The Third Sunday of Advent - 10:00 AM Sermon Title: Oaks of Righteousness Text: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Sunday, December 24

10:00 AM - The Fourth Sunday of Advent Family and Friends Intergenerational Service - Dramatic Skit

06:00 PM - Traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 31 - New Year's Eve - Keeping Watch Service - 10:00 AM Text: Ecclesiastes 3:1-13, Psalm 8, Revelation 21:1-6a, Matthew 25:31-46





### [DEAS FOR [IVING JOYFULLY: FORTY DAYS OF CELTIC ADVENT & THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Let the Nativity journey – room; the wise m Jesus hidden. :	e. No need to do them a Holy Spirit speak to you Place Mary and Joseph en in another; the sheph Set up the stable with an each figure journey to B	ur heart! in one corner of the erds, another. Keep imals, and enjoy	November 15 Visit a beautiful spot in or near your home. Breathe and listen. How is God preparing you for Christ's birth?	16 Share an encouraging word with a friend in need	17 Give thanks for one thing you enjoy in your work	18 Enjoy your favourite photos, share them with a friend or family member and tell stories
19 Say Hi to a person standing on the fringes. <i>Move Mary &amp;</i> <i>Joseph closer</i>	20 Take a loved one on a walk, outside or down memory lane or both	21 Smile at people you see, whether you know them or not, and enjoy their smile!	22 CS Lewis Day Appreciate an animal companion today Aslan Lives!!	23 List what you are thankful for, tell God, tell each other	24 Make a meal for someone in need or visit someone who is lonely	25 Give someone you love a long hug
26 Welcome a new person at church. Move Mary & Joseph closer	27 Read or Tell stories to loved ones	28 Turn off recorded music and sing some favorite songs with loved ones	29 Write a gratitude note to a family member or friend, hide it in their pocket or lunch	30 Call a friend & tell them one thing you appreciate about them	December 1 Color a picture for a child in your life	2 Take a break from the internet and look out the window. Just look. What do you see?
3 Kneel down when you greet & talk to a child <i>Four-week</i> Advent begins	4 Take a friend to tea (or coffee), leave the smartphone in your bag	5 Play a game from childhood or with a little person in your life	6 Send a loved one on a treasure hunt Today. Give them clues & giggle a lot	7 Say Hi to people behind the counters. Wish them a good day	8 Notice the eye- color of people close to you and marvel at beauty	9 Light candles for whatever place or situation breaks your heart
10 Move Mary & Joseph closer. Move the Wise Men closer. What journey are you on?	11 Take a walk and enjoy the Christmas lights	12 Listen to and share some favourite music that makes you smile	13 Enjoy grilled cheese and tomato soup (dipping is encouraged) or another favorite comfort dish	14 Read a story out loud to your friend, child, parent, or spouse	15 Notice the really small things in life, like bugs or dust bunnies	16 Take a break from your smartphone and all screens this evening. Rediscover the world.
17 The "O" Antiphons: Wisdom (Isa. 11:2-3) & Laudate Sunday Read Mary's Song: Luke 1:46- 55. Light a pink candle for JOY	18 Lord (Isa 33:22) Ask God how he wants to be the Lord of your life. Listen. Move the Wise Men closer	19 Root of Jesse (Isa 11:10) Write memories of God's faithfulness in your life on paper ornaments & hang them on the tree	20 Key of David (Rev. 3:7) door of your life do you need God to open & bring grace? God has the key to every door. Move Mary & Joseph almost to the stable	21 Morning Star (Isa 9:2) As the sun rises today, pray for God's light to shine in a place or situation that is breaking your heart	22 King of Nations (Isa 9:6) Listen to Handel's Messiah: "For Unto us a Child is Born" What does it mean to you for Christ to come again?	23 Emmanuel (Isa 7:14) How is God with you? How are you God's presence to others? Sing "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (all the verses!)
24 Christmas Eve Where have you experienced God's Joy this Advent? Mary & Joseph enter the stable	The Birth! Adopt someone who needs a family or be adopted if you need one. Put Jesus in the manger; add the Shepherds, too.	26 The Twelve Days of Christmas Begins! John 1:1-5	27 Genesis 1:3 The Wise Men journey closer each day	28 The Holy Innocents Psalm 139:11-12 Pray for children around the world	29 Psalm 19:8	<b>30</b> Isaiah 58:10
<b>31</b> Isa 60:19	January 1 Ps 43:3	2 Matt 5:14-16	3 John 8:12	4 1 Peter 2:9	5 Epiphany Eve Luke 4:1-21 The wise men orrivel 20 + C + M + B + 18	6 Epiphany Christ's Revealing Romans 8 Light candles around the house

HOW WE SPEND OUR DAYS IS HOW WE SPEND OUR LIVES. AND DULARD

Calendar created with joy by Susan Forshey at ContemplativeCottage.com. Please share freely



From Treasurer Desk:

Pledge Cards 2018: As of November 26, 2017-- 24 families/individuals have returned their pledge cards.

Hoping that all families will choose to participate and complete their pledge cards by either mailing them to church or bringing them to church and dropping them in the collection plate. Your pledge will support the everyday operations and upkeep of the church as well as allowing the church to serve our church families and the surrounding community.

### From Property Committee:

The railing has been installed on the stairway leading to the James Ward Memorial Garden. (Special thanks to John Freeman!!)





Ken Ward,

# CHURCH COUNCIL



Next Church Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday December 12, 2017 @ 7:00 PM.

It is important that all Committees have a representative as we will be discussing Budget and Slate Officers for 2018.

Special Meeting will be held on Sunday December 17, 2017 right after Worship Service (11:15 AM)

We need a guorum of at least 20 members, to discuss important things regarding our Parish.



Judith Conrad, pianist Dan Moniz, clarinet Andrew Safioleas, violin Joyce Jacobsen, soprano Paul Ukleja, Trumpeter Otto Guzman, Cello Hagop Anmahian, violin The Delight Consort

Playing a variety of music, seasonal and classic. Refreshments will be served Free to all





## C. A. N. Tree Festival Concert Saturday December 16th, 7 PM First Congregational Church 282 Rock Street, Fall River





## First Congregational Church of Fall River

Service Grief and Remembrance For those who struggle with the Holidays Wednesday December 13th, 201 7:00PM

Blue Christmas

282 Rock Street, Fall River MA 02720 www.fccfallriver.org / 508-672-5862 and families of all ages.

First Congregational Church 282 Rock St. Fall River, MA (508) 672-5862 www.fccfallriver.org



# DIACONATE CHRISTMAS PROJECT



Adopt a child for this project for just \$25.00 until January 2018.



### **IT IS SO EASY!!!!** THE SHOPPING HAS BEEN DONE NOW WE NEED FAMILIES TO SIGN UP TO ADOPT A **CHILD FROM DSS**

(Department of Social Services)

### HF PROCESS

- Sign your family name on the list.
- Give your \$25.00 to Linda Fernandes or Denise Ward
- Please take an ornament off of the Christmas tree as a momento of the project-when you decorate your tree each year, the ornament will remind you of your fellowship for the less fortunate
- YOU ARE DONE-THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT!!!
- Gifts will be picked up in December



This has been a very worthwhile endeavor that our church has embraced HOWEVER

We need volunteers to help with the preparation as well as serving.

# SOUP KITCHEN

The meals are planned by Larry LoVerde and Denise Ward. They do all the shopping and guide us in the preparation.

Committed dates:

Jan 2nd, 2018 Feb 6th, 2018 Dec 5th

Mark your calendars to be at our church by 2:30 PM





Join us for Soup, Salad & Bread Featuring a special visitor, fellowship And Happy Birthday Jesus cake!





Once again this year at Christmas we will have the opportunity to remember our loved ones with poinsettias. The poinsettias will be on display from December 10th through December 24th. We will list all memorials in December 17th & December 24th bulletins and the in January Parish Guide. To allow time to prepare the listing, the DEADLINE for placing your order has been set for:

> 12:00 PM Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Help us make our sanctuary look as beautiful this year as it has in the past at Christmas time. Order forms are available in the weekly bulletins, on the table in the Narthex, or by calling or emailing the Church Office. An order form is also printed in the December

Parish Guide.

### Living Memorials



If you would like to establish or add to an existing Living Memorial, you may send a check to the Church Office or place it in the offering plate along your order.

Living Memorials either established or added to since Easter will be read aloud at the Christmas Sunday service.

The deadline for Living Memorials is Wednesday, December 6, 2017.





**I**N memory of





Memoríal Poinsettias

### Order Form

All poinsettias are one size and are \$20.00 each. A list of all memorials will be available in our December 17th and December 24th bulletins as well as the January Parish Guide.

To allow time to prepare the listing, a Deadline of 12:00 noon, Sunday, December 3rd has been set for placing your order.

In Memory Of:

(please print) Donated by:

(please print)

The poinsettias will decorate our sanctuary from December 10th through December 24th.

Please check one:

will take the poinsettia following the December 24th, 10:00 AM or 6:00 PM service.

I will not take the poinsettia following the December 24th, 6pm service

ation has been made to ongregational Church of Fall River





# December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 First Sunday of Advent Worship Service @10:00AM Confirmation Class @ 11:30 AM	4	5 Soup Kitchen @ 2:30 PM Yoga Class 6:00-7:00 PM	6	7	8	9
10 Second-Sunday of Advent Worship Service@ 10:00AM Kids Christmas Party @ 11:00 AM Confirmation Class @ 11:30 AM	11 Lunch Bunch 1:00 PM	12 Church Council Meeting @ 7:00 PM Yoga Class 6:00-7:00 PM	13 Blue Christmas Service @ 7:00 PM	14	15	16 CAN Tree Festival @ 7:00 PM
17 Third-Sunday of Advent Worship Service@ 10:00AM Special Meeting @ 11:15 AM	18	19 Yoga Class 6:00-7:00 PM	20	21	22	23
24 Fourth-Sunday of Advent Worship Service@ 10:00AM Fourth-Sunday of Advent Worship Service @ 6:00 PM	25 Office Closed	26 Yoga Class 6:00-7:00 PM	27	28	29	30
31 Worship Service @ 10:00AM	Happy) Unen Leave					



Have you ordered your brick to help Walkway in the

Order forms are available in the Narthex

### Congratulations and Best Wishes

We know these lists may be incomplete, so we ask that anyone whose name is not included be sure to call the Church Office with the necessary information.

















