

Good Tidings

December 2020



Arnold Mills United Methodist Church

Rev. Arlene M. Tully

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*Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. (Luke 3:4-6)*

Dear Church Family,

I remember reading about a meeting of software designers. They were using typical technical jargon to discuss a data exchange interface with a vendor. One engineer said the programming that had been ordered was delayed because the vendor was suffering from a “severe nonlinear waterfowl issue.” Curious, the team leader raised his eyebrows and asked, “What exactly is a ‘severe nonlinear waterfowl issue’?” The engineer replied, “They don’t have all their ducks in a row.”

How about you? Christmas is just around the corner. Do you “have all your ducks in a row”? Maybe you decorated the tree over Thanksgiving weekend...scoured the internet for Black Friday deals...swapped out the Pumpkin Spice candles for the Holly Berry ones...unpacked the Christmas CDs and your copy of “It’s a Wonderful Life”. But are your Christmas ducks *really* in a row? Is your *heart* as prepared for the arrival of the Christ child as your *home* is?

Perhaps you’ve noticed that every one of the Gospels includes John the Baptist as the harbinger of Jesus’ appearance, along with John’s exhortation to “Prepare the way of the Lord...” Each Advent John goes out ahead of Jesus to call us to line up our ducks – to clear out whatever gets in the way of our spiritual preparations for Christmas – to fill up with the things that strengthen our relationship with God and neighbor – to make the way smooth and straight for Christ to come again into our hearts and minds and lives.

It’s a good thing that we hear from John every Advent because frankly, we need the reminder. Our cultural preparations for Christmas have a tendency to crowd out our spiritual preparations. There’s nothing inherently wrong with the secular aspect of Christmas. But we can easily get so caught up in the commercial frenzy, or spend so much time and energy shopping, decorating, baking, etc., that we don’t leave adequate time or attention for prayer, reflection, and other spiritual preparations.

As we move through the season of Advent, and closer to the celebration of Jesus’ birth, I pray that we’ll all take the time to search ourselves, our plans, our priorities, and our activities, and look for ways that we might “prepare the way of the Lord and make his paths straight”, so we can be sure that our spiritual preparations for Christmas don’t suffer from a “severe nonlinear waterfowl issue”.

Advent Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Arlene'.

Pastor Arlene



ADVENT SERMON SERIES

“I Believe, Even When...”

This year’s Advent worship series is inspired by Marcia McFee’s “Worship Design Studio” and by the words of a haunting anthem by Mark Miller. Miller set to music part of a poem that was scratched onto the wall of a basement during the Holocaust:

I believe in the sun, even when it’s not shining.

I believe in love, even when I don’t feel it.

I believe in God, even when God is silent.

It is a powerful affirmation of belief in spite of what seems like the absence of light, of love – and sometimes even what feels like the absence of God.

The story of Jesus’ birth is filled with common themes of human drama – unknowing, doubt, disgrace, fear, oppression, journey, hardship. By exploring the first chapter of each of the Gospels, we will affirm the presence of hope through Christ, “even when...”

- November 29 – 1st Sunday of Advent – “I Believe in the Sun” - Luke 1:26-38
- December 6 – 2nd Sunday of Advent – “I Believe in Love” - Matthew 1:18-25
- December 13 – 3rd Sunday of Advent – “I Believe in God” - Mark 1:1-8
- December 20 – 4th Sunday of Advent – “I Believe Even When...” - John 1:1-5

FREE RESOURCES FROM THE UPPER ROOM

The Upper Room is offering several excellent resources for spiritual wellness for individuals and families during COVID-19. Included are digital devotionals, videos, eCourses, podcasts, etc., all of which can be accessed free of charge. Go to www.upperroom.org/covid-19



THE LONGEST NIGHT

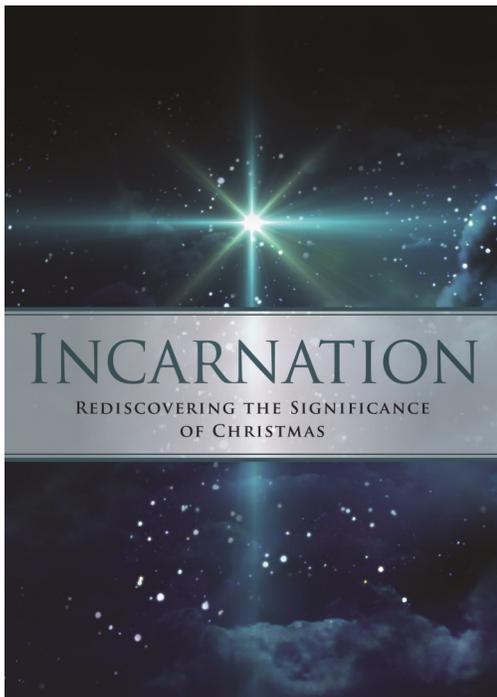
A Blue Christmas Service

Online Monday, December 21 at 7 PM on our website at www.amumc.org.

The Longest Night Service (also known as Blue Christmas) marks the winter solstice – the day with the shortest period of daylight and longest night of the year. This contemplative service acknowledges that the Christmas season is not necessarily “the most wonderful time of the year” for everyone. The Longest Night service welcomes both the light and the dark of Christmas season and offers hope in the midst of sorrow. Join us for this soothing balm to the plastic atmosphere of the “holidays.”



“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.” (Isaiah 9:2)



ADVENT STUDY—*INCARNATION*

4 Sessions Beginning December 2

Adult Study—Wednesdays 10:00 AM or 7:00 PM

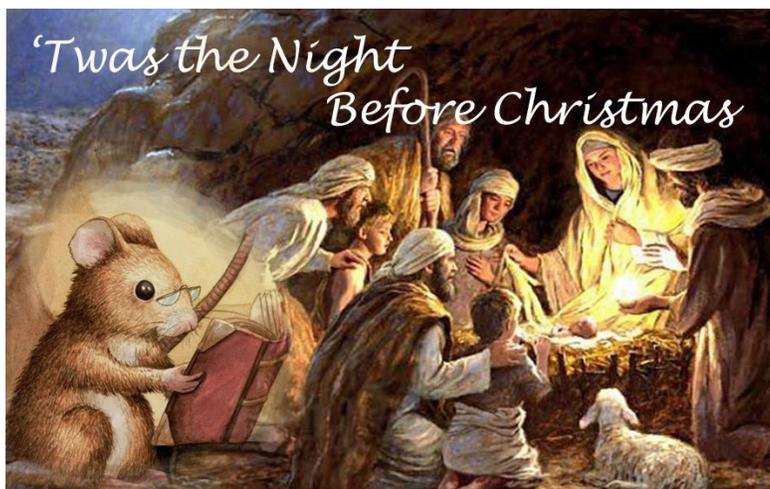
His parents gave him the name Jesus. But the prophets, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels addressed him by other names. They called him Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, and Word Made Flesh. In *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*, best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth.

This Advent season we will come together to remember what's important. In the face of uncertainty and conflict, Christians reclaim the Christ Child who brings us together, heals our hearts, and calls us to bring light into the darkness. Now more than ever, we invite you to reflect upon the significance of the Christ-child for our lives and world today!

LESSONS AND CAROLS

December 24 at 7 PM

Bishop Devadhar and his Cabinet will be sharing a prerecorded Christmas Eve worship service of Candlelight Lessons and Carols. This virtual time of prayer, scripture, and music will be available on our website at www.amumc.org by 7 PM on Christmas Eve.



VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

December 24 at 5 PM

Our Christmas Eve Family Service goes virtual this year with carol singing and “Twas the Night Before Christmas”—the story of Mr. Mouse, who learns the real meaning of Christmas. The service will be available by 5 PM Christmas Eve on our website at www.amumc.org.

*But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.
(Luke 2:10-11)*



SUNDAY SCHOOLERS' GAME NIGHT

December 7 at 6:30 PM

Pastor Arlene is hosting a Zoom game night for Sunday Schoolers on the first Monday of each month at 6:30 PM. Join us for games like Wheel of Fortune, Pictionary, Family Feud, and more. Contact Pastor Arlene at pastor.amumc@gmail.com for the Zoom link

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING

Tuesdays from 6:30—7:00 PM

Join us on Zoom as we gather to share our concerns and to pray for the people and situations in need near and far. The link for the Zoom meeting is zoom.us/j/563411339



WORSHIP VIDEO DVDs

If you don't have access to the internet to watch our online worship service, but you do have a DVD player, we can provide recordings of the Sunday worship services. Just call Pastor Arlene at 401-335-5156 and she will arrange a no-contact drop off each week.



VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR

Join us as we gather online for Sunday morning coffee hour. Catch up with old friends and get to know new ones at zoom.us/j/678414614



PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Arlene's office hours are by appointment while the church building is under shutdown. To set up a time to meet (either via Zoom or socially distanced in person), please email her at pastor.amumc@gmail.com or call 401-335-5156.

Trustee Notes for November 2020

The Trustee Committee did not hold a meeting in November but will meet in December on Wednesday the 9th at 7:00. At this time it will most likely be a Zoom meeting.

Even without meeting we all have been busy.

- A Proof of Claim about the Boys Scout national bankruptcy case was filed in order to protect the church as a sponsor of a troop.
- Heating problems have arisen again necessitating the shutdown of the boiler until a new part arrives. This happened just after in person services were halted and the weather has not been extremely cold so the church is cold but still not in danger of pipes bursting!
- We are meeting with Stanley Tree Service to get an estimate on taking down many broken branches and one tree.
- The Gutter Guy has by now cleaned all the gutters at the church and the parsonage.
- Marques Cleaning Service has been employed since we reopened for services and deep-cleaned the sanctuary, office areas, Cargill Hall, the kitchen and upstairs bathrooms. They will return as needed or when we reopen.
- It was suggested at the church meeting to receive the Lucille Martin memorial funds that we find a way to honor Lucille's continuous requests for prayers for peace and her love of the natural world. Planting a tree or creating a Peace Garden gave us the idea to do both. On the lawn in front of the church there are two small stone walls which could use some attention. We are envisioning rebuilding the walls to a comfortable seating level and planting a tree behind the wall on the left after removing the dead shrubs. It would be a small, spreading variety to match the tree on the right. This would be done by a professional stoneworker and nursery. If anyone has other ideas or comments please let one of the trustees know. We value your input!

Sincerely submitted,

Lindsay Gettinger, Co-Chair

401 374-2351

Church Missions Report

December 2020

Note: The various Mission and Social Concern activities continue to be modified or on-hold due to the ongoing health crisis. Please follow the various announcements from the church office as decisions are made to reschedule or readjust these services and programs.

Meals in the Park

The most recent Meals in the Park event was held on Sunday, October 11th at Bouley Field on Social Street in Woonsocket, RI. Thank you for your donations of sandwiches, chips, desserts and homemade masks for these needy families. We fed around 80 people and gave out 120 meals. Our support for this program means so much to so many people. **Our next meal is Sunday November 29th.** Please let Karen know if you can bake, make sandwiches and or volunteer in the park. We will be having chicken pot pie. Please call Karen 333-2166 if you have any questions or would like to donate to this wonderful program.

HAPPY Basket Program

The revised HAPPY Basket Program donations of boxed and canned goods and financial contributions has begun with a bin on the elevator porch for AMUMC members and friends to make their donations. The program organizers rely on many donations and contributions to provide food and Christmas gifts for needy families. Any questions, contact Chip Thurlow: thurlowcp@aol.com, 401-333-1235.

The Revised Christmas Gift Giving Program

The Adopt-A-Family organization in Woonsocket was not able to run the Christmas gift giving program this year so the Boys and Girls Club of Woonsocket chose to manage the gift giving effort this year. **AMUMC members have conscientiously planned to provide five gifts each for five children.** The gifts will be forwarded to the program organizers and distributed to the families in the Woonsocket area.

Cintas Clothing Donation

The Cintas clothing and our church donations to the St. James Episcopal Church and occasionally to the Community Care Alliance, both in Woonsocket **have resumed following extensive adjustments to address protections for our drivers and the clients who access the clothing closet program at St. James Church.** Rob Blais, Rich Bizier and Chip Thurlow are the drivers for the twice or thrice monthly deliveries – the first, third and fifth Thursdays of the month.

Franklin Farm Community Garden

The Franklin Farm Community Garden has been put to bed for the Winter. If you drive by the Farm you can see the Winter Rye that has germinated in the three garden areas in order to minimize erosion and to add valuable nitrogen to the soil when it is plowed under in the Spring. **The matching fundraising for the RI Community Food Bank was a huge success! The Squash Hunger Program raised \$10,000 which the Directors of the Historic Metcalf Franklin Farm Preservation Association will match resulting in a \$20,000 donation to provide assistance to ease hunger in Rhode Island.** Any questions contact Pam or Chip Thurlow; thurlowcp@gmail.com; 401-333-1235.

Dave's Marketplace Day Old Bakery Donations

The Monday, Wednesday and Friday transporting day old baked goods from Dave's Marketplace at Chapel Four Corners to various community organizations continues! A signup chart is available for interested volunteers. Contact Chip Thurlow if interested: thurlowcp@aol.com; 401-333-1235.

Habitat for Humanity

The next Habitat for Humanity project is under development. We will notify AMUMC members when volunteer dates are announced. Any questions, contact Chip Thurlow: thurlowcp@aol.com.

Clothing and Boxed and Canned Goods Donations

The donated goods are forwarded to either the Northern RI Food Pantry or the Woonsocket Shelter as necessary.

Chip Thurlow, Chairperson, AMUMC Missions and Social Concerns Committee

Church School News



BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO THEM,
 "DO NOT BE AFRAID.
 I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS
 THAT WILL CAUSE GREAT JOY
 FOR ALL THE PEOPLE."

LUKE 2:10, NIV

The church school began working with "The Gift of Jesus" unit on November 15th which will continue through the month of December.

Bible Verse: "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people.'"

(Luke 2:10)

Main Idea: Christmas is really about God's great gift to us in Jesus. We can share this wonderful story with others by our words and actions.

The Christian Education Committee would like to wish everyone a happy, safe and healthy Christmas Season!!!

- Since there is no in-person worship at this time, church school lessons are sent out on a weekly basis to our church school families
- If you have not received these lessons and would like to, please email Lee Ann Cotta at leeann.cotta@gmail.com to be added to the list
- The lessons are in the form of a slide show and occasionally may also have a list of directions and materials needed
- The lessons will be sent out on the Tuesday before the Sunday lesson

DECEMBER Birthdays

Here's who's having a birthday this month:

December 11th: Jessica Cunningham

December 20th: Olivia Carney

God Bless you all on your birthday and the coming year!

Puzzle!

Use the code to complete Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus, our Savior.



CODE:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q

10 23 13 17 14 6 18 21 21

11 14 12 10 21 21 14 13

6 24 23 13 14 1 15 4 21

12 24 4 23 2 14 21 24 1

22 18 16 17 3 8 16 24 13

14 5 14 1 21 10 2 3 18 23 16

15 10 3 17 14 1 25 1 18 23 12 14

24 15 25 14 10 12 14

ISAIAH 9:6, NIV

Answer: And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6, NIV

Worship Committee



I want to take this opportunity to recognize and thank those who serve on the Worship Committee so our experience at worship time is as meaningful as possible. Not only does it take a village to raise a child but also to assist in our church life. When you see these people be sure to say "thanks". Our church wouldn't be what it is without them.

Acolytes: Stacy Johnson
Altar Flowers: Sharon Bizier
Altar Guild: Rachel Odom, Pam Thurlow and Ann Hetherington

Altar Steward: Ross Hancock
Choir Rep: Pam Thurlow
Greeters: Anne-Marie Rivard
Liturgist: Rebecca Puleo
Music Director: Joey Mazzarella
Ushers: Rich Bizier

A reminder that we would like to add to our Altar Guild team and are looking for Acolytes. If you are interested, please contact me at thurlowcp@verizon.net.

Pam Thurlow, Chair
Worship Committee

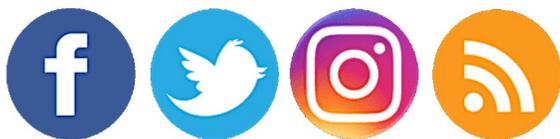
Upcoming Events

December 1: UMC Giving Tuesday
December 9: Board of Trustees Meeting
December 24: Christmas Eve
December 25: Christmas Day

SPRC News

Our committee also includes Lee Ann Cotta, Stacey Johnson, Joyce Fox, Sandy Angell, Anne Hetherington, and Brandon Bell.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns having to do with the staff of the parish feel free to see any member of the committee or you can email us at amumcsprc@gmail.com



Arnold Mills UMC's Social Media

Find us on social media! We are on Facebook where you can read Pastor Arlene's Daily Reflection and on Instagram.

Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Arnold-Mills-United-Methodist-Church-115722435105941>

Twitter at https://twitter.com/ArnoldMills_UMC

Instagram at https://www.instagram.com/arnold_mills_umc

Listen to sermons on our website at <http://www.amumc.org>

Subscribe to sermon podcasts at <http://www.buzzsprout.com/434047>

Prayer Requests

Prayer requests are sent out each week to every address on our email list. We understand that not everyone who asks for prayer in worship during "Sharing Our Joys and Concerns" wishes to have that information shared on the email blast. If you would like to have a prayer request included in the weekly email, please use the "Prayer Request" form on the table in the back of the sanctuary, call the office at 401-333-5203, or email office.amumc@gmail.com. Prayer requests will remain on the prayer list for one month. If you would like a prayer request to remain longer, just let us know.

Today

< > December 2020







SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29 United Methodist Student Sunday ● 10am Online Worship Service	30	Dec 1 Giving Tuesday	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 ● 7pm Board of Trustees - Zoom	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day Christmas Day	26
27	28	29	30	31	Jan 1	2
● 10am Online Worship Service				New Year's Eve New Year's Eve	New Year's Day New Year's Day	



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Rev. Arlene M. Tully



Check out our webpage at www.amumc.org

Effective November 8, 2020 we have online worship only.

Worship videos will be posted by 10 AM each Sunday.

We will return to in-person worship as soon as it is safe to do so.