

**Mattapoisett Congregational
Church**

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Pastor

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ADVENT IS HERE!

Mattapoisett Congregational Church has a full slate of Advent activities to bring joy, meaning, and delight to the season. We celebrate in music, word, and worship, freshening our treasured traditions, and perhaps trying some new things. Please invite someone to join you.

Nov. 29. First Sunday of Advent (Hope)

10 a.m., Hanging of the Greens service featuring the symbols of the season and the Bell Choir. Lunch, Christian Education pot-luck following worship in Reynard Hall, with crafts and carols.

Inauguration of Mission's "Star Month," where we get to "vote our passion."

Dec. 6, Second Sunday of Advent (Peace)

10 a.m. worship, with Communion,

"Mary's Story" – Luke 1:26-38

Dec. 13 – Third Sunday of Advent (Joy)

10 a.m. worship, "Hey, Joe" – Matt. 1:18-25, featuring the Bell Choir

3 p.m., Harper & Minstrel Concert, Sanctuary

5:30 p.m., White Gifts pageant featuring children and youth of the congregation, Reynard Hall.

Dec. 20 – Fourth Sunday of Advent (Love)

10 a.m. worship, Christmas Cantata featuring the Senior Choir.

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve

5 p.m. Family Service, designed with kids in mind, featuring the Bell Choir.

11 p.m., Candlelight Service, featuring the beautiful music of the Harper and Minstrel.





Every now and then I find myself waiting with nothing to occupy my attention. It could be that the doctor fell behind her schedule, or the mechanic underestimated the time to change the oil, or maybe the person I'm meeting is caught in Boston traffic. In any event, there I sit, nothing to do but wait.

In all likelihood I'd been scrambling to get myself someplace on time, adding up in my mind all the factors that combined to make me three, five, even 10 minutes late as I breathlessly rush through the door. But, I needn't have rushed. Whatever or whoever I feared was waiting for me has become the one for whom I must wait. So, I sit and get comfortable.

If I'm lucky, there is no blaring television in the lobby. Maybe I've forgotten my reading glasses, or there's no People magazine to peruse with guilty pleasure. Hopefully, I left my cell phone in the car. But there is a comfortable chair, and the temperature isn't too cool. I'm just left quiet, comfortable, alone with my thoughts.

These times are special gifts. I do, in fact, think of them as divine gifts. I imagine God has pulled some cosmic strings for me to have this time because somehow I needed it. Maybe God wants me to figure something out, or calm down, find peace with a pesky problem, or remember something important – none of which can be accomplished with a blaring television, smart phone, or People magazine at my disposal.

If you've ever had to unexpectedly sit and wait in quiet, comfortable solitude, you have a good idea of what Advent is about.

Advent may be one of the strangest seasons of the church, and the most difficult to observe appropriately. All the church seasons are all about *something*: Christmas is about Jesus' birth; Lent is about self-examination and repentance; Easter is about resurrection, etc. Advent is about something, too. It's about waiting.

The fact that Advent is about waiting in itself makes it difficult to observe. That's because very notion of "waiting" points our focus to the future (Christmas) rather than the here and now. It's especially difficult to sit quietly and wait when blaring from every corner are bursts of gold and silver, red and green.

So, instead of savoring the experience of waiting, we get busy. After Thanksgiving, we start decorating, buying and wrapping gifts, sending cards, baking goodies, thinking about a tree, and hunting

through the basement to find the candle lights to put in the windows. In some ways, we are *already celebrating* Christmas, and lose the waiting experience altogether.

So how does one wait properly, especially when everyone is so excited about Santa Claus and egg nog? Here are some ideas:

- ◆ Make space in your day, or week, to sit quietly. Literally. Take 10 minutes, find a comfortable place, put the cell phone out of earshot, turn off any media, and sit. If it helps, pretend you are waiting for an appointment and left your cell phone in the car by mistake.
- ◆ When we wait quietly, our imaginations spring to life. Imagine your ideal future – it's OK to luxuriate. But don't stop there. After you've mentally established your perfect life, add in your immediate family if they aren't there already. How can your family members be perfect and fit perfectly together? Expand to other relatives and friends. Now that you're happy, how might they be happy? How could your community be perfect? What about the whole world? What does a perfect world look like?
- ◆ When we wait quietly, we start to remember things, so remember Christmases of the past. If the memories are pleasant, luxuriate in them. If memories are painful, consider how God delivered you so that now you are safe, warm, and comfortable. Think about all the cosmic forces that lined up to bring you to that very moment of comfort and peace.
- ◆ When we wait quietly, we plan and make mental lists. If your thoughts drift toward Christmas planning, imagine the people whose lives your planning will enhance. Try not to imagine the tasks themselves (finding a parking spot at the mall), but the faces of people who will enjoy the fruits of your labors (the teenager who will be surprised and delighted by having the last "it" thing).

I'd be interested to know your thoughts on this odd season of waiting. In the meantime, let your imaginations soar!

Advent blessings,

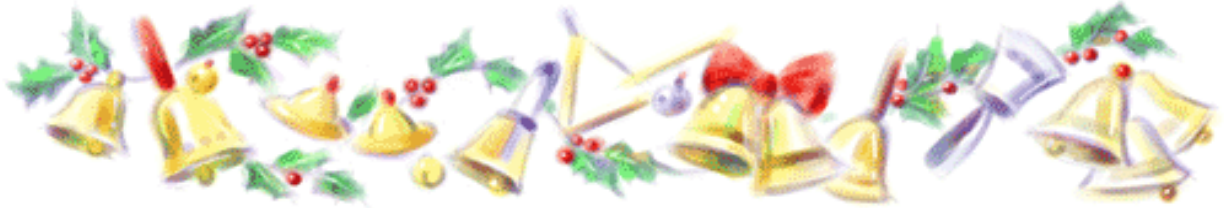
Rev. Amy Lignitz Harken

Confirmation



We are organizing for a spring Confirmation class. Once again, confirmation is for youth, grades 8 through 12. We'll meet Monday evenings starting January 25, with classes lasting approximately through April.

Several youth have signed up, and we are looking forward to a good class..



Advent season begins on November 29 . This is a special time as our church choir and bell choir join together to sing and ring the beginning of Advent. Throughout the advent season the bell choir will be ringing all the way to Christmas Eve. Please come and hear our wonderful choir and bell choir this Advent season.

In our Sanctuary ... Harper and the Minstrel Hold Early Holiday Concert

The church sanctuary will be filled with Christmas music from the Renaissance, Medieval, and Baroque eras when The Harper and the Minstrel hold an early holiday concert at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13.

For several years, the Harper and the Minstrel (aka Jay and Abby Michaels), have ushered in Christmas at the late candlelight Christmas Eve service. Beautiful vocals, harp, flute and other instruments lend a contemplative, peaceful mood to our holiday observances. A \$5 donation is suggested.

Parable Study

A Wonderful Experience

Thank you to everybody who participated in our parable study with the Tifereth Israel Congregation. It was a smashing success by all accounts. We met three times at the synagogue in New Bedford, and twice in Mattapoisett, in the media room in the church basement (a.k.a. "garden level" – and thanks to Dave K., Marc A., and Dave S. for setting up the room.) Approximately 45 people attended each of the sessions, led by Rev. Amy Lignitz Harken and Rabbi Raphael Kanter, with half coming from each congregation. Plans are in the works for continued study and fellowship, so stay tuned!

Stewardship Update

Happy Holidays and Bountiful Blessings to All!

From the feedback the Stewardship Committee has received to date, the changes made to the Stewardship campaign this year were a success. Everyone liked the tri-fold brochure which is called a “narrative budget,” another way of describing where our total budget is spent each year. We had wonderful artwork and decorations, testimonials each Sunday, culminating in Stewardship Sunday where we broke our record for the number of pledges received that day and shared a wonderful lasagna lunch and instant campaign results!

We have kept you informed in Sunday bulletins and email messages as to where we stand with our Stewardship efforts. Because Tideings is only distributed once per month, these figures may be old by the time you read them so keep that in mind. As of November 11, we had raised \$194,700 for the operating budget and \$41,500 for the mission budget! Referring back to your tri-fold, (which is still on your desk or refrigerator I am sure) our operating goal was \$225,000 and the mission goal was \$30,000. Remember, our personal financial offerings represent about 88% of what the church actually needs to run the church. The remainder of revenue comes from investment income, small stipends paid by some of the community groups who use the church, holiday fairs, etc.

We are confident that more pledges will be sent in before the end of the year, that our pledges will exceed last year’s giving and we will have bounty enough to continue and expand God’s work here at Mattapoissett Congregational Church. Thank you again to all who have contributed to this success.

Have a very healthy, happy holiday filled with God’s bounty and joy,

Cindy Wicks, Stewardship Chair



MISSIONS HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

It's that time of year when we count our blessings and give thanks for the greatest gift of all--Jesus. Your mission committee is so thankful for your pledges of support. In the spirit of the holidays we have several initiatives to tell you about.



Alternative Gift Catalog

Tara has pulled together a list of wonderful organizations that can use your financial support. For the person who truly has everything, you can make a donation to one of these organizations and you will receive a gift card to give to your special person instead of a traditional gift. Who needs another tie anyway?! This idea arose out of our late summer retreat. It will help others and needs no gift wrapping! A table will be in Reynard Hall each Sunday during Advent for your shopping convenience.

Gift Cards

Speaking of shopping pleasure, we will once again offer gift cards for sale at the missions table. New this year, you will need to order your cards ahead of time and once we have enough to make an order we will send it in and let you know when the cards arrive. So please shop early in order to have the cards ready for the big day.

Christmas Tree Voting--Follow up to our Retreat

We pulled together all of your comments and suggestions from the retreat and the yellow sheets up in Reynard Hall this past September. Now we want your vote on which of your suggestions we should fund and pursue. There will be three Christmas Trees up in the Hall starting with the Hanging of the Greens on November 29. Each of us will be given 6 votes: 4 green stickers to indicate where you want our money to be spent and 2 gold stars to indicate where you want to be involved in hands on mission work.

The 3 trees will be:

- ◆ The Tree to Fight Hunger
- ◆ The Tree to Support Education
- ◆ The Tree to Help People in Need

There will be a variety of options on each tree for your votes. The voting process will be explained at the potluck luncheon on the 29. The trees will be available throughout Advent and will provide us with direction going forward.

Please take the time to vote and to think of where you might find amazing rewards through hands on mission work. Working together we can do amazing things!
Wishing you a meaningful Advent Season and a Merry Christmas,
Drew, Dennis, David, Tara, Lynne, Gary and Sue

Christian Education

DEC. 13, 5:30 pm - WHITE GIFT
PAGEANT SERVICE

All are welcome to attend this special youth led worship which includes a children's Christmas pageant, hymns, a White Gifts presentation, and fellowship. White Gifts refers to the gifts purchased and wrapped in white paper, and collected during the service. The gifts are a great help to local families in need. White Gift tags are available during coffee hour.



Bag Hunger NOW! 150 Granola Bars needed!

....Celebrating Advent/Christmas Season together.....

CHRISTMAS
Joy



We are collecting special family traditions and spiritual practices. Sometimes our most simple family practices are the most special, such as lighting a candle at dinner, reading Christmas stories throughout Advent, driving around looking at Christmas lights, making Christmas cookies with Gramma, opening up the doors to an Advent calendar together, watching "It's a Wonderful Life" on Christmas Eve, setting up the Nativity scene in the same place every year, placing the star or angel on the tree first, etc.

Please share your family traditions and spiritual practices or your favorite ones from your youth and place in the collection box on the White Gifts Table in Reynard Hall.

THANK YOU

Greeters : The Carroll Family, Penny & Don Carlstrom, Hospitality

Ushers: Deacons

Deacon of the Month: June Damery

Trustees of the Week: David Kaiser, Arthur Blackburn, Roxanne Buntert

Memorial Flowers: The Osborn Family, The Dunn Family, Liz Lavalley

Refreshments: Hospitality, Johanna & Jeff Riley,

Sound & Recording: David Dunn & Bob Field & Megan Field

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO WOULD LIKE A FRIENDLY VISIT?



LET THE VISITATION COMMITTEE KNOW!

Contact any member:

Joan Manchester	Madelyn Fogler
Gert Soares	Carol Shute
Betty Parker	June Damery
Gail Dunn	Cindy Johnson
Beverley Moore	Elizabeth Field
Bruce Rocha, Sr.	

We continue to keep in our prayers friends and members of the church who are homebound or ill. Please contact the church office if you or a family member would like a visit during a hospitalization



Helen Eldridge	Phyllis Howes
Bobby Knight	Fran Gordon
Lois Murray	Lorraine Ward
Dight Crain	Lynne Olson

DEADLINE FOR JAN TIDEINGS

is December 15.

MATTCONG@VERIZON.NET

Nothing will be accepted after 12/21.



Greetings MattMen!



Thanks for taking our survey. We have gotten good response and there's strong interest in having breakfast together one Sunday a month before service. We've cleared the idea with Deacons, Hospitality, the secretary, and Amy, so we're all set. The first MattMen (only, so far) Breakfast will be on Sunday 12/6, in Reynard Hall. I'll confirm the time and maybe get a sign-up going, but we'll probably put on the coffee and start cooking around 7:15—then sit down to bacon, eggs, pancakes, and coffee around 8:00!

Hope you can make it!

Thanks for the many donations of knitted/crocheted baby hats and blankets. They were delivered to the three area hospitals and to Massachusetts General Hospital.

Baby sweaters are needed. Items may be left at the church office or call Beverly Farwell, Old Colony Women's Fellowship.

DECEMBER 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 6:45 am PRAYER	2 5:00 WomenSpirit 6:00 pm DEACONS 6:30 pm CHOIR 7:30 pm BELLS	3 5:30 pm MISSIONS 6:30 STEWARD.	4	5
6 10:00 am WORSHIP COMMUNION MATTMEN BREAKFAST- 7:15 AM	7 9:30 am WORSHIP CTTE. 4:30 pm NOMINATING CTTE.	8 6:45 am PRAYER 6:00 pm CE	9 5:30 pm TRUSTEES 6:30 pm CHOIR 7:30 pm BELLS	10	11 WHITE GIFTS SET-UP	12 WHITE GIFTS SET-UP
13 10:00 am WORSHIP CONCERT 3:00 WHITE GIFTS 5:00 PM	14	15 6:45 am PRAYER 5:00 pm PASTORAL RELATIONS CTTE.	16 6:00 pm EXEC CTTE 6:30 pm CHOIR 7:30 pm BELLS	17	18 OPEN TABLE 4:30 PM	19
20 10:00 am WORSHIP CANTATA	21	22 6:45 am PRAYER	23 6:30 pm CHOIR 7:30 pm BELLS	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 5:00 SERVICE 11:00 CANDLELIGHT SERVICE	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 
27 10:00 am WORSHIP	28	29 6:45 am PRAYER	30	31 NEWYEAR'S EVE		

REGULARLY SCHEDULED FUNCTIONS/MEETINGS IN THE CHURCH BUILDING

<u>Catelli Dance School</u> Monday 2:30-6:45 Tuesday 3:00-6:30 Wednesday 3:00-8:00	<u>Brownies & GS</u> <u>Troop 88266</u> Monday 5:30 pm <u>Troop 80017</u> Tuesday 5:45 <u>Troop 75429</u> Friday 6:00 pm	<u>BS & CS</u> <u>Troop 53</u> Tues 7:00 pm <u>Pack 53</u> 1st/2nd Thurs 6 pm Pack Night: 3rd Thurs 6:00 pm	<u>Mattapoisset</u> <u>Woman's Club:</u> 3rd Thursday at Noon	<u>Sippican Choral Society:</u> Mondays at 7:30 pm	<u>AA:</u> Wed 7:00 pm Thurs, 9:30 am <u>ACA:</u> Mon. 6:00 pm Sat 10:00 am
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