

# THE NEW COVENANT



## News from The United Presbyterian Church of Whitinsville

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### *In Search of Our Kneeling Places*

In each heart lies a Bethlehem,  
an inn where we must ultimately answer  
whether there is room or not,  
When we are Bethlehem-bound  
we experience our own advent in his.  
When we are Bethlehem-bound  
we can no longer look the other way  
conveniently not seeing stars not hearing angel voices.  
We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily  
tending our sheep or our kingdoms.  
This Advent let's go to Bethlehem  
and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.  
In the midst of shopping sprees  
let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.  
Through the tinsel  
let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.  
In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,  
let's listen for the brush of angels' wings.  
This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem and find our kneeling places

Weems, Ann (1980). *Kneeling In Bethlehem*. The Westminster Press: Philadelphia.

### The United Presbyterian Church of Whitinsville

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Office Hours: 12:30 PM - 4:30 PM Mon & Wed 8:30 AM- 12:30 PM Tue & Fri

\*The church office is CLOSED on Thursdays\*

If you would like to see the newsletter in color, please view it on the website.

**December**  
**2022**

## ~ December 5 – December 25 ~

<b>Ministries</b>	<b>December 4</b>	<b>December 11</b>	<b>December 18</b>	<b>December 24</b>	<b>December 25</b>
<b>Worship Leader</b>	S. Santoro	M. Alling	L. Walsh	Susan DeHoff	R. Thomas
<b>Greeters</b>	J. Baker	L. Walsh	B. Giezma	D. Baker	C. Lee
<b>Sound Board</b>	G. Giemza	G. Giezma	M. Thomas	G. Giezma	G. Giezma
<b>Powerpoint</b>	K. Mercer	R. Thomas	S. LaMae	M. Mercer	M. Thomas
<b>Media</b>	K. Remillsrd	K. Remillard	K. Remillard	K. Remillard	K. Remillard
<b>Coffee Fellowship</b>	K. Mercer	J & D. Baker	T. Morin		G. McCrea
<b>Junior Worship</b>	K. Mercer	S. Santora	M. Mercer		R. Thomas/ M. Mercer
<b>Counters</b>	J. Baker T. Morin	K. Mercer G. Giezma	M. Alling G. McCrea		T. Morin M. Thomas

### *December Birthday Corner*

Sarah Szajna	12/13
Eileen Straub	12/13
Heather Whitney	12/14
Brandy Giemza	12/17
Haleigh Reynolds	12/17
Carol Pilibosian	12/28
Betty Austin	12/29
Kathy Miedema	12/30
Tanya Morin	12/30



### *December Anniversary Corner*

Tom & Cindy Frieswyk 12/28

#### **\*\*\*Sunday Morning Worship Schedule\*\*\***

<b>Adult Education</b>	<b>9:00AM - 10:30AM</b>
<b>Children's Sunday School</b>	<b>9:30 AM</b>
<b>Morning Worship Service</b>	<b>10:30AM - 11:30AM</b>
<b>Coffee Fellowship</b>	<b>11:30 AM</b>

<b>~ January 1-January 8~</b>
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<b>Ministries</b>	<b>January 1</b>	<b>January 8</b>
<b>Worship Leader</b>	M. Alling	J. Tobin
<b>Greeters</b>	J. Baker	L. Walsh
<b>Sound Board</b>	G. Giezma	G. Giezma
<b>Powerpoint</b>	R. Thomas	K. Mercer
<b>Media</b>	K. Remillard	K. Remillard
<b>Coffee Fellowship</b>	K. Mercer	J & D. Baker
<b>Junior Worship</b>	M. Mercer	M. Mercer
<b>Counters</b>	K. Miedema/ M. Thomas	K. Mercer G. Giezma

### **SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

We did not have a quorum for the November meeting so we could not vote on anything.



Note from the Pastor – December 2022

“Haul out the holly/Put up the tree before my spirit falls again/Fill up the stocking/I may be rushing things, but deck the halls again now!”

“It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas/Everywhere you go /Take a look at the five and ten, it's glistening once again/With candy canes and silver lanes that glow.”

“Deck the halls with boughs of holly. Fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la./ ‘Tis the season to be jolly. Fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la./Don we now our gay apparel. Fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la./Troll the ancient yuletide story, Fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la.”

Ah, the sounds of the holiday season! They're already being piped into shopping areas, in the hope that they will encourage shoppers to spend more money.

So here's a question to ponder: Why isn't there a song about “Haul out the Advent Wreath?”

A couple more questions: Why isn't there a song about “It's beginning to look like Christmas, see the large and small nativity sets in the window?” And why is it not the season to be joyful with songs of praise that have meaning rather than meaningless, jolly songs of Fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la?

Perhaps a possible answer is embedded in one reason explaining why that the celebration of Christ's birth is in the December. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE, Christianity had not been adopted by the Roman Empire. It is supposed that it was safer for Christians to celebrate the birth of Christ at the same time pagans were celebrating the Unconquered Sun, with feasts and the exchange of gifts. And, too, December 25 was the date that the birth of the pagan deity Mithra, a god of light and loyalty, was celebrated, a celebration that had increasing popularity among Roman soldiers. The celebration of Christ's birth was well camouflaged!

Since no one really knows for sure when Jesus was born (the time thought by some to have been March or April rather than winter), December 25 seemed as good a date as any, and it stuck. But what also stuck is the way it was celebrated: in keeping with activities similar to secular, or pagan, celebrations.

I wonder what would happen if Christians did a better job of separating the celebration of the secular holidays from the celebration of Christ's birth? I wonder about that both from the perspective of individual and family discipleship and growing in faith and from the perspective of non-Christians who observe our activities throughout December.

How might family life be impacted by the family lighting a candle in the Advent wreath placed in the middle of the dining table and reading a verse of Scripture that fits the name of that particular candle (hope, peace, joy, love)? How might doing that activity before eating a meal impact neighbors whom you've invited to come to dinner some evening in December?

How might the opening of gifts change if they were placed beneath or in front of a nativity scene or in just a crèche instead of under a tree decorated with baubles? We can *say* in church that we give gifts to remember that God sent the greatest gift of all – his only begotten son – to us, but unless we do something at home to make those words more of a reality, they ultimately all on deaf ears.

This year, I challenge you to put some thought on how you will remember and celebrate the birth of the Messiah in a way that helps you draw closer to him. And for those who are involved in some way in raising children or adolescents, put some thought on how you can help them grow in *their* faith by learning more about the circumstances of and immediate reactions to the birth of the Son of God.

Pastor Dr. Susan DeHoff

## **ADVENT SERMON SERIES**

**November 27—December 24, 2022**

**November 27, 2022**

**“Jesus, Why Did You Come: Fulfill the Law”**

**Matthew 5:17-18, Deuteronomy 4:1-8**

**December 4, 2022**

**“Jesus, Why Did You Come: Abundant Life”**

**John 10:10, Ezekiel 34:11-15**

**December 11, 2022**

**Jesus, Why Did You Come: Judgement”**

**John 9:39-41, Isaiah 11:-16**

**December 18, 2022**

**“Jesus, Why Did You Come: To Reveal the Father”**

**John 14:9, Psalm 2: 1-7**

## **CHRISTMAS SERMONS**

**December 24, 2022**

**“Finding *Your* Place At the Manger”**

**Luke 2:8-16**

**December 25, 2022**

**“Jesus, Why Did You Come: Light”**

**John 12:46, Isaiah 9:1-2**

NAC Advent Events:

Saturday, December 10th, Taize Service at Village  
Congregational Church, 7:00 PM

Saturday, December 17th, Living Nativity at Rockdale  
Congregational Church, 3:30–5:30 PM

Sunday, December 18th, Blue Christmas Service at the Methodist  
Church, 2 PM

Saturday, December 24th, Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols at  
UPCoW, 4:00 PM

Saturday, December 24th, Christmas Eve Carols, Lessons,  
Prayers at the Methodist Church, 6:30 PM

Saturday, December 24th, Christmas Eve by Candlelight at  
Village Congregational Church, 10:00 PM (organ, Village Bell  
Ringers, & Choir

Sunday, December 25th, Special Worship Service at UPCoW, 10:30  
AM

Sunday, December 25th, Free Community Christmas Dinner, 12:00  
Noon to 2:00 PM at the Methodist Church

# CHURCH FAMILY PHOTOS



Right Photo: Jimmy receiving his certificate for completing his FLETC (weapon) training..



## DEACON HIGHLIGHTS

Hello there. This is Debbie checking in with highlights from our October 24th Deacons' Meeting to keep you abreast of what your Deacons are up to.

I hope you find this information informative and may it also remind you to feel free to contact the Deacons if you know of any needs or concerns that we may be unaware of.

Our meetings begin with the "usual business". Opening prayer, Approval of past minutes, the Treasurer's Report, etc. Then we begin the real nitty gritty of how we can be Deacons in action.

Schedules for communion servers and counters were discussed.

NAC Thanksgiving Baskets-After several years of not being able to be part of this program, the Deacons decided to contribute 3 baskets to needy families. Then NAC asked if we could add a fourth family. We had faith in the Lord and church family that we could do this and Praise God. He and you came through.

Care Receiver Update-We try to contact or connect with our shut-ins once a month (at least) by phone, visit, or card. At our meetings we update each other on their status so we can pray for their needs.

CPR-The Deacons are looking into CPR training to begin in the spring. That would go along with our "Well Care" cards in the event of a medical emergency.

NAC Christmas Gifts-It is requested by anyone who sponsored a Thanksgiving Dinner basket would then support the same families at Christmas. Tags will hung on church tree in December so anyone who could or would like to but a gift of either a toy or clothing for a child can take a tag. We will then get our gifts to NAC for you. The Deacons would take care of any "unclaimed:" tags.

Prayer Concerns and Joys-These were shared along with prayers for shut-ins.

The meeting was closed in prayer by Carol.

We want to thank you for your continued support and may God bless you as you have blessed us and with our service.

In His Name,

Deb Baker,



## Prayers of Praise and Concern

Tanya Morin asks prayers for her friend **Kate** who slipped and fell this past week and broke both ankles. Her job at Gillette Stadium requires her to do a lot of walking.

Ronda Thomas has a prayer for healing for her brother, Greg, who underwent another surgery on his eye.

Kimberly Mercer asks prayers for her father-in-law, who has just been diagnosed with a neurological disorder that will affect his speech, his walking, and cause tremors. Medication will mitigate it, but not cure it, and the symptoms will become worse over time. Prayers for wisdom and peace as the family navigates this situation.

Keep Jimmy Tobin and his family in your prayers, as his grandmother, Virginia McNiff went to be with the Lord recently.

Tanya Morin has a prayer of joy and thanks that a nodule on her thyroid turned out not to be big enough to biopsy when she went to the hospital for the procedure.

Patty Reynolds asks prayers for her twin brother, Michael, who recently had emergency spinal surgery . Pray for complete healing.

Mary Spalton asks prayers for her brother-in-law's family as his sister went to be with the Lord a few weeks ago following a recent diagnosis of stage 4 cancer.

Bernie Koerten has a prayer of thanks and praise that, with the help of drs. and nurses at the hospital, he has been able to get through Covid and is now back home able to do the things he likes to do.

Jimmy Tobin has a prayer of thanks and praise that his friend Jai found out the day before Thanksgiving that he is cancer free.

Jean Finnegan asks prayers for hand surgery to uncurl her fingers, which is coming up on Dec 15.

Gay McCrea asks prayers for her daughter, Heidi as she prepares for surgery this month.

We say some prayers for Marilyn Alling, that the laryngitis that she has had since Thanksgiving will go away.

Ronda Thomas asks for continued prayers as she continues to recover from a recent fall.

Ronda also asks continued prayers for her brother, Greg, who is still hoping to regain more sight in his left eye.



For the January 2023 newsletter, please submit them to the office no later than Friday, December 16th

THANK YOU

The Deacons would like to thank all of the congregation for your food and monetary donations to the NAC Thanksgiving Baskets. All of the families that we supported were deeply grateful .



A very big thank you to Rev. Greg Keosaian for his help with the Officer Training last month! Pastor Susan

## *Words of Inspiration from the Deacons....*

As we come into a new season, the anticipation is growing with the exciting holidays ahead of us...

Thanksgiving is a time when we tend to think of turkey and all the trimmings, but it also should remind us of all the benefits that we have received ever since our forefathers came to this land from over the seas. Their courage and determination to make a better world for mankind, no matter where they went, has carried on through the ages to the benefits that we have acquired over the years.

During the flow of time from the pilgrims making their way to the new world, our country has gone through eons of changes since then. From the simple life they lived, things have dramatically changed since then. Evergreens have turned from the simple life to the dramatic colors that are now added, and the decorations of Christmas are even fancier than the simple hand-made wooden figurines that our forefathers made.

The only things that have not changed are the determination, stamina, and love that mankind has learned to work with. As Christians, we all have learned many lessons from our forefathers as we move on ahead and teach our own children the same things we learned in life. Together, we have carried out these lessons of life that stand for unity in our world, country, states, communities, and homes. No matter what kind of difficulty we may endure, we have also learned that we need to be kind, patient, and an understanding to our fellowmen (and women!)

This is basically what Jesus also tried to tell the world when he was here on earth, and he died for the brief ministry that has lived and grown into a major part of our life. As we gather together this year for our celebrations, take time to remember your family, and their ancestors as we continue to thrive in a world of love, hope, and understanding.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

## DECEMBER 2022 CHURCH CALENDAR

### (2nd Week of Advent)

- Sun. 4** 9 AM Adult Sun Sch (ZOOM) 10:30 AM Worship Service  
11:45 AM Coffee Fellowship  
4 PM Cookies & Carols
- Mon. 5** 7 PM Session Prayer Meeting
- Wed. 7** Peace of Bread (UPCoW is serving tonight!!)  
6 PM New Member Class  
7 PM Safe Child Policy Training (CG & N and Session)
- Fri. 9** Newsletter Submission Deadline for January 2022

### (3rd Week of Advent)

- Sun. 11** 9 AM Adult Sun Sch (ZOOM) 10:30 AM Worship Service  
11:45 AM Coffee Fellowship
- Wed. 14** Peace of Bread  
6 PM New Member Class
- Fri. 16** January 2023 Newsletter Submissions Due

### (4th Week of Advent)

- Sun. 18** 9 AM Adult Sun Sch (ZOOM) 10:30 AM Worship Service  
11:45 AM Coffee Fellowship 12 PM John Bible Study
- Wed. 21** Peace of Bread  
6 PM New Member Class
- Sat. 24** 4 PM Christmas Eve Service

### (Christmas Season)

- Sun. 25** 10:30 AM Worship Service 11:45 AM Coffee Fellowship
- Wed. 28** Peace of Bread