

An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike for December 21, 2022

The Church Offices will be closed next week but we will still be checking email and taking phone calls and checking messages.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Christmas Eve Services: 6pm Children and Family Service, 6:45-8pm Music and Meditation, 8pm Candlelight and Communion Service

The Music and Meditation service will take place in the Sanctuary. For those who wish to socialize during this time the service will be streaming in the church hall, where you can join us for conversation and refreshments.

Zoom will continue to run throughout the evening services. Once you join you will automatically be muted.

Sunday Christmas Service will be at our regular time of 9:30am.

Please note, there will be NO SUNDAY SCHOOL on Sunday December 25th AND Sunday January 1st.

Christmas 2022 Memorials – Thank you to all that purchased a Christmas Memorial. The list is attached. **Poinsettias can be picked up after the Sunday, Christmas morning service.**

2023 Giving Envelopes are now available in the Narthex.

From the Outreach Committee – “We currently are participating in the county's **Holiday Sharing program**. Our church family is providing Christmas dinner and presents for 5 local families and 5 local seniors. We appreciate everyone who is helping with this event.

We are still collecting food for the local soup kitchen. You can bring meal-stretching items like **instant mashed potatoes, boxed mac & cheese, rice, and stuffing mix** to the church and place those items in the box in the narthex. Every item already received has been given away.

The committee appreciates all the help our congregation gives to both our local projects and global projects throughout the year. Merry Christmas to you and have a blessed New Year.”

If you are visiting the church during the week, please be careful of the children at the school. We ask that if you are driving in during drop-off or pick-up hours that you wait behind the cars as to not endanger any of the children getting in and out of the

cars. These lines move rather quickly. Morning hours are typically 8:15-9:15 and then afternoon is usually 11:30-12:30. If you have any questions, please contact the office.

We want to remind you that we are still using Zoom for our Sunday

Services. Zoom allows you to join us from wherever you may be!! (Join us in your pj's with a morning cup of coffee) As most of you who Zoom our worship services know, I greet Zoom attendees as they sign on, take Zoom attendance, and assign names to phone numbers as phone callers sign on. I open the Zoom meeting at 9 a.m. to give people time to sign on. I encourage you to sign on early to avoid the crush of people signing on at the last minute. The earlier you sign on the easier it is for me to attend to the greeting responsibilities. It also gives us a chance to chat and share prayer requests.

If you should have any problems logging in, please alert Jennifer in the office.

If you have prayer requests, even if you plan to share them at Sunday worship, you may forward them ahead of time to Jen at the church office and she will compile a list to be used on Sunday morning.

The Announcements and Bulletin for Sunday's service are included as attachments to this encouraging word. Please feel free to print them out and either bring them with you to the service or to use them as your guide as you Zoom the service.

A Christmas Prayer

Holy God, our sustainer and comforter,

Even as we celebrate your birth of hope into the world
we are filled with fear and doubt.

Even as we decorate our homes with the cheerful adornments of this season
they belie the anxiety and distress of our hearts.

And so, we pray that your peace descend into our lives
soothing our troubled spirits and renewing our hope.

Facing a world torn by competing ideologies
which hold us hostage to the possibilities of war and annihilation,
we pray for peace and a lessening of tensions.

Lord, guide the leaders of our world along paths toward peace
and the setting aside of political or selfish ambition.

May the spirit of Christmas peace invade their hearts.

We pray for the day when the nations shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks,
when nation shall not lift up sword against nation
and study war no more.

In this holy season,
we pray for a renewal of hope as we face daily reminders of
intolerance, racism, and various forms of extremism.
May the balm of your love overwhelm and heal
the wounds of hatred and strife.
Help us live as you taught us to live,
loving all others, even our enemies,
praying for our persecutors,
and forgiving as we would want to be forgiven.

Lord, as we face injustice in our nation and world,
and injustices children; hunger, poverty, homelessness and disease,
we pray for your justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
May your love, born into the world on Christmas day
be born into our own hearts and through our hearts
into the lives of all those who carry injustices wounds.

We are mindful of those who face this season
carrying wounds of heart, mind, or soul,
and of others who are enduring physical illness.
We are mindful of those who are facing this season
with empty chairs at the table carrying
a heavy grief over their loss.
We ask that your Holy Spirit accompany all these,
comfort and sustain them.
Grant them healing of mind, body, and spirit.
Renew within them and all of us
the joy of Christmas day and the promise that it carries;
that everything will be alright. Amen