

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
4 Mead Street
Walton, NY 13856**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

THE CONNECTION
December 2020
**Connecting God's People
Through Love**



DECEMBER 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Wednesday Chat 3:30 ZOOM	3	4 Elijah's Closet Committee Meeting 9:00 Elijah's Closet 10:00-2:00	5 Elijah's Closet 10:00-2:00
6 (Second Sunday of Advent) 10:00 – Worship/Communion 4:00- ADVENT ZOOM	7	8	9 Wednesday Chat 3:30 ZOOM	10	11 Elijah's Closet 10:00-2:00	12 Elijah's Closet 10:00-2:00
13 (Third Sunday of Advent) 10:00 – Worship 4:00- ADVENT ZOOM	14	15	16 Wednesday Chat 3:30 ZOOM	17 Newsletter Deadline	18 Elijah's Closet 10:00-2:00 Prudential Mtg 3:30 pm ZOOM	19 Elijah's Closet 10:00-2:00
20 (Fourth Sunday of Advent) 10:00 – Worship 4:00- ADVENT ZOOM	21	22	23 Wednesday Chat 3:30 ZOOM	24 Christmas Eve 	25 Merry Christmas!	26 Elijah's Closet 10:00-2:00
27 (First Sunday after Christmas) 10:00 – Worship	28	29	30 Wednesday Chat 3:30 ZOOM	31 New Year's Eve		

If there are any additions or changes that you would like to submit after the 17th please do so and I will do my best to get it in the Newsletter. Information can be left in the Secretary's mailbox or emailed to the church at: waltonucc@frontiernet.net

If anybody is interested in receiving the newsletter by e-mail please leave a message with your e-mail address in the Secretary's mailbox, or email the church at: waltonucc@frontiernet.net

THE CONNECTION

December 2020

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

4 Mead Street, Walton, NY 13856

Church Phone: (607) 865-4066 Email: waltonucc@frontiernet.net

Church Website: www.uccwalton.com

Elijah's Closet Thrift Shop Open Friday and Saturday 10am-2pm

Elijah's Closet Phone # 607-865-7935

A NOTE FROM Janet

THE TREE OF JESSE

Isaiah 11 vv. 1-3 states that *"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of council and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord."*

Jesse was the father of David. As we read in the Book of 1 Samuel, the prophet Samuel was sent by God to find a new king to replace (eventually) the current evil King Saul. Saul was not leading the people of Israel in the path of God and he became obsessed with himself and with power. So God directs Samuel to go to Jesse's home in Bethlehem and anoint one of his sons as the future King chosen by God. When Samuel comes to the house he finds that Jesse has eight sons. Each of seven sons are interviewed by Samuel, to each one God tells Samuel "not him". Finally Samuel asks if another son is available. Jesse replies that the young boy David is in the field watching the sheep. You can guess what happened. David eventually enters the court of Saul and becomes Saul's musician to play his harp to sooth the King. When Saul finds out that David is chosen by God, a crisis happens; Saul wants to kill David, Jonathan (Saul's son) intercedes and protects David. It is a great story! You can find it in 1 Samuel 16-31.

The point of our use of the Jesse Tree is to depict the ancestry of David, and as Isaiah writes it becomes the root of the genealogy of the Messiah. Stained glass windows throughout Europe depict this tree with Christ as its message. We, over the years, have written hymns and poems of this tree which is intended to glorify the origins and roots of the Messiah of humankind. As the Christian Church became established much of the Jesse Tree and the words of Isaiah became part of what we call today the "O Antiphons" which were chants sung at vespers. From December 17th to the 24th, the early church chanted the "O Antiphons" each day. They are:

- 17 December O Sapientia (O *Wisdom*)
- 18 December: O Adonai (O *Lord*)
- 19 December: O Radix Jesse (O *Root of Jesse*)
- 20 December: O Clavis David (O *Key of David*)
- 21 December: O Oriens (O *Dayspring*)
- 22 December: O Rex Gentium (O *King of the Nations*)
- 23 December: O Emmanuel (O *With Us is God*)

Our Christmas is filled with a long and extensive past and with many words of wisdom, songs of joy, knowledge of God's history and God's glory. We celebrate the time God has prepared for us to be incarnate with us in Jesus Christ. This is how we celebrate Christmas!

Let us be blessed in the knowledge and celebration of Christ with us: Emmanuel!

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

The readings used at our weekly worship service and in most Mainline Protestant Churches and in Roman Catholic Churches are from a list of assigned readings known as The New Revised Common Lectionary. In our Congregational tradition, pastors are encouraged to use the assigned readings but it is not mandatory. I personally prefer to follow the readings and I mainly focus on the Gospel lessons for my meditation. It gives me and you a structure through which we can study and learn from the teachings of the scripture of the Word (Logos) of God in our midst.

The readings for December: (You are encouraged to read them as well)

DECEMBER 6 – SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isa 40:1-11; Ps 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Pet 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

DECEMBER 13 – THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isa 61:1-4, 8-11; Ps 126 or Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Thess 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

DECEMBER 20 – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

2 Sam 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55 or Ps 89:1-4, 19-26; Rom 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

DECEMBER 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE

Isa 9:2-7; Ps 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

DECEMBER 25 – CHRISTMAS DAY

Isa 52:7-10; Ps 98; Heb 1:1-4, (5-12); John 1:1-14

DECEMBER 27 – FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Isa 61:10-62:3; Ps 148; Gal 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

DECEMBER 31 – NEW YEAR'S EVE

Eccl 3:1-13; Ps 8; Rev 21:1-6a; Matt 25:31-46

MODERATORS MESSAGE

Make Kindness the Norm

The phrase “random acts of kindness” (RAK) is relatively well known and has been shared all over the world. A Random Act of Kindness is simply doing something nice for someone else, without them asking and without you doing it for anything in return.

Ask yourself “When did I do something nice for another person without expecting anything in return?”

The wonderful part of random acts of kindness is that there are not only benefits to the receiver but also to the giver.

1. Whether you are recipient or giver or merely just a witness you can feel the benefits of an increase in oxytocin. Oxytocin is commonly called the “love hormone” and this helps to lower blood pressure, improve overall heart health, and increase self-esteem.
2. Kindness can increase the feeling of strength and energy due to helping others.
3. Kindness can also make one feel calmer.

4. Less depressed.
5. Increased feelings of self-worth.
6. For those that volunteer their time or money for charitable causes, they often have fewer aches and pains.
7. Kindness pushes your body to produce serotonin, which is commonly known as the “feel-good” chemical that provides healing and calming feelings.
8. Kindness decreases pain, by generating endorphins (the brain’s natural painkiller).
9. Stress, it has been shown that people that are more kind have 23% less cortisol (the stress hormone).
10. Anxiety, the University of British Columbia did a study on a group of highly anxious individuals in which they performed at least 6 acts of kindness a week. After one month, there was a significant increase in positive moods.

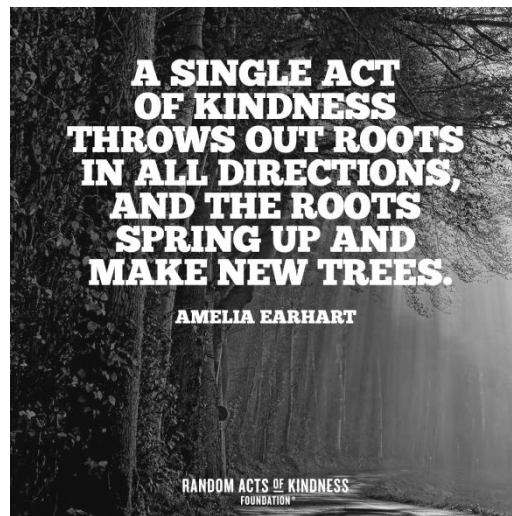
Sources: Cassidy & Shaver, 2008; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Keltner & Haidt, 2003; <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/the-science-of-kindness>; Christine Carter, UC Berkeley, Greater Good Science Center; Stephen Post, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine.

Random Acts of Kindness Ideas

Check out this quick list of Random Acts of Kindness Ideas that you can do easily throughout your week.

1. When in line to get your morning coffee, pay for the person behind you.
2. Whoever you interact with today, if it’s 3-50, compliment the first two people.
3. Pick up your phone and open your text-messaging app – send a positive text to 4 people.
4. Donate items in your home that you haven’t used in the past year.
5. Leave some spare quarters at the laundromat or in a vending machine for someone to find.
6. When at the store, leave any extra not-used coupons next to the products for someone to find that could really use them.
7. When parking your car, take out a piece of paper and pen. Leave a note to a fellow car (driver 😊) to let them know that they did an amazing job at parking.
8. Smile genuinely at 5 strangers throughout your day.
9. Hold the door open for someone.

This holiday season, why not do something nice – a Random Act of Kindness – it will not only benefit the person receiving the act of kindness but also you!



If you would like someone on the prayer list, please contact Mary Carroll. If an address is provided, a card will be sent.

Mary Carroll is the Elijah's Closet Duty Member for December.

The Trustee for the month of December is Bruce Ellis.

If you have any updates to your address, phone number, email address or if you want to add a cell phone number to our records, or if you would like to add your Birthday or Anniversary to our list please submit to the Church Secretary through email or putting it into the Secretary's box. Thanks!



These are the Birthdays and Anniversaries of members and friends of our church family. If you know someone on the list who's having a birthday or anniversary, feel free to send that person a card. Even if you don't know anyone on the list, feel free to send any celebrant a card. More importantly, strive to hold each of these people up in prayer on the anniversary of their birth. Please call the Church Office with additions or corrections 607-865-4066.

1st Rosemarie Tiesler
2nd Glen LePinnet
6th Lorraine Davila
6th Ronald McAdams
7th Kathi Smith
9th Haley Marian Clark
10th Chris Clark
10th Mary Eggelton
20th Todd Ogden
25th Beth Ogden
27th Jan Kilpatrick



31 Days of Kindness Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Encourage others to share kindness, share this calendar	Give someone a compliment	Open a door for someone	Smile at a stranger	Do something special for your mom	Do a chore around the house	Call a family member and ask them how their day is going
Donate items around the house	Bake cookies for your neighbor	Ask your dad how you can help him	Help cook dinner	Set the table	Help with the laundry	Tell your grandparents how much you appreciate them
Play with your sibling, let them choose the activity	Give your teacher a flower	Volunteer in your community	Share your snack with a friend at school	Offer to take a neighbor's dog out for a walk	Go outside and feed the birds	Do something to be kind to yourself today
Take some supplies to a local animal shelter	Compliment the first person you see today	Smile at every person you see today	Open every door for the person behind you today	Do a favor for an elder today	Donate canned food to your local food bank	Forgive someone you've had issues with in the past
Write down all the positive qualities about yourself	Thank someone in your life you may have taken for granted	Take a break from all digital devices today, think of kind acts you can do in the future instead				

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