

*THE CONNECTION*  
*December 2021*



*Connecting God's People Through Love*

## December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 Elijah's Closet 10-2 <b>Christmas Sale Continues</b>	4 Elijah's Closet 10-2 <b>Christmas Sale Continues</b>
5 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent  Worship 10 AM Communion	6	7	8	9	10 Elijah's Closet 10-2	11 Elijah's Closet 10-2
12 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent Worship 10 AM <b>Deacons Mtg. after church in the Parlor</b>	13	14	15	16	17 Elijah's Closet 10-2  <b>Prudential Board Mtg 3:30 via Zoom</b>	18 Elijah's Closet 10-2
19 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent  Worship 10 AM <b>Sunday School Play/Soup Lunch/Caroling</b>	20	21	22	23	24 Elijah's Closet <b>Closed</b>  <b>Christmas Eve Carillon Service 4:00 PM</b>	25 Elijah's Closet <b>Closed</b>  <b>Christmas Day</b>
26 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas  Worship 10 AM	27 <b>Church in Society Mtg. 6:30 at Church</b>	28	29	30	31 Elijah's Closet <b>Closed</b>  <b>New Years Eve</b>	1 Elijah's Closet <b>Closed</b>

## 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)

Date	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading and Psalm	Alternate 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading and Psalm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Gospel
<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> December 5, 2021	Baruch 5:1-9 <b>or</b> <i>Malachi 3:1-4</i>	Luke 1:68-79	Philippians 1:3-11	Luke 3:1-6
<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b> December 12, 2021	Zephaniah 3:14-20	Isaiah 12:2-6	Philippians 4:4-7	Luke 3:7-18
<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b> December 19, 2021	Micah 5:2-5a	Luke 1:46b-55 <b>or</b> <i>Psalm 80:1-7</i>	Hebrews 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)
<b>Nativity of the Lord</b> December 24 & 25, 2021 <i>Christmas Eve, Morn, or Mid-Day</i>	Isaiah 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)
<b>First Sunday After Christmas</b> December 26, 2021	1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26	Psalm 148	Colossians 3:12-17	Luke 2:41-52

## From the Christian Education Committee

The Sunday School Children will present a Christmas play during the church service on December 19<sup>th</sup>. They look forward to sharing with you either in person or through the live stream on YouTube. Following the service, a take out soup, bread, and Christmas cookie lunch will be offered. We can deliver to anyone living within the village. If you would like to order a lunch delivery, please call the church at (607) 865-4066 and speak with Dana. If he is not available, please feel free to leave a message with your name and address. That afternoon at 4PM everyone is invited to meet in the church parking lot to join in Christmas Caroling to our shut-ins and other locations around the village. We look forward to a fun filled day filled with the Christmas spirit.

## Notes from the Deacons

**CHRISTMAS FAMILY:** Once again we have the opportunity to share in God's love by adopting a family to support during this season. Our Giving Tree will be located in the sanctuary. Please take a tag off the tree, purchase the suggested gift, wrap the gift, attach the gift tag and place the gift under the tree. This year we have a family with a 6 year old girl, a mom and a dad. The little girl wears 6-7 in clothes size and size one in footwear. She likes trolls, unicorns and arts and crafts. Please have the gifts back under the tree by December 17, 2021 (Friday)

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE:** This year we will have a carillon concert featuring music of our carillon and people can come and enjoy the concert from their cars. We will hand out gift bags of hot chocolate, candy canes and a small treat. After hearing the music of Christmas, attendees may also chose to joins us for a candlelight discussion highlighting the spirit of Christ in us. The concert will begin at 4:00 pm and will last about one half hour. The candlelight discussion will begin right after the concert.

**SINGING OF HYMNS:** WE ARE NOW SINGING HYMNS IN CHURCH FOR SERVICES. MASKS ARE STILL REQUIRED AT THIS TIME.

## Moderators Message

### **Church Meeting**

While it has been difficult trying to figure out the right course to chart in these uncertain times, the pandemic has certainly caused us to look at our past and plan for our future.

At our Church meeting on Sunday, November 21<sup>st</sup> we had a great open, frank and positive discussion of where we are and where we are headed. What came out of the discussion you ask? Well, since you asked... here is a summary.

- **Fellowship** – Why do we come to church? In addition to the spiritual growth, we come for the fellowship with our fellow parishioners. Have we lost people because they are not getting the fellowship connection?
- **Open and Affirming** – We are the only church in the community that is truly Open & Affirming. This means that we welcome and embrace persons of every sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression into the full life, membership, leadership, employment and ministry of this church. This sets us apart from other churches in the area.
- **We Listen** – while some attendees have attended other churches, they commented that our Church listens to what people have to say. Let's keep that up!
- **Membership** – When we look in our future, to increase membership, young families might not be the logical place to start especially if they have not had a spiritual upbringing. Perhaps the 40-60 year olds, who might be looking more for spirituality is more our target audience.
- **Committee Structure** – We are all so invested in making things work, are we on the verge of burn-out? Maybe the committee structure needs to be examined so members are not pulled in so many directions.
- **Building** – Our building is spacious but are there additional ways we can use, unused space?
- **Pastor** – it is no secret that Pastor Janet will retire, most likely in the next year +/- . It was also

discussed about the time it takes to execute a search and a replacement. A full time pastor would be our choice and including our older youth should be included in the search. Do we start the search now?

- **Finances** – Along with the discussion about Pastorship, talk turned to finances and how the Church will finance a full-time Pastor.
- **Social Media** – We have made an attempt to offer services through YouTube, but has attendance been lost because of this? Is there any Pastor that might offer distance services, if needed? Also, is there more we can do through social media to let people know about us?
- **Services** – Parents liked having Sunday School during service time. Having services last 30 – 45 minutes is liked. Maybe services need to be “changed up” a bit.

I hope that gives you a little insight into what was discussed and where our focus will be in the future.

**Annual Meeting-** Sunday, January 16 has been set aside for our Annual Meeting. Please mark your calendars and be sure to attend the meeting.

**NANCY**

**A NOTE FROM**  
**Janet**

**O ANTIPHONS**

During the time of the Christmas week, it is traditional that during evening prayers the O Antiphons were either sung or recited after a meditation praying for the events that lead up to the incarnation of Christ among us. If you meditate or do special prayer during the Christmas week, include the thoughts of the O Antiphons:

**December 17** – O Wisdom of our God most high, guiding creation with power and love: come teach us the path of knowledge.

**December 18** – O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law Moses on Sinai: come to rescue us with your mighty power.

**December 19** – O Root of Jesse’s stem, sign of God’s love for all his people: come to save us without delay.

**December 20** – O Key of David, opening the gates of God’s eternal Kingdom: come and free the prisoners of darkness.

**December 21** – O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

**December 22** – O King of all nations and keystone of the Church: come and save us, whom you formed from the dust!

**December 23** – O Emmanuel, our King and giver of Law: come and save us Lord our God!

I sometimes end up with an odd number of pages for the newsletter. On these occasions, I have included a recipe or puzzle that I thought you would enjoy. Please let me know if you have something you would like to share with the rest of the congregation. It could be a story, a recipe, a poem, Photos you think others would like to see... anything appropriate for the newsletter. Send it to me at [secretary@ucewalton.com](mailto:secretary@ucewalton.com).