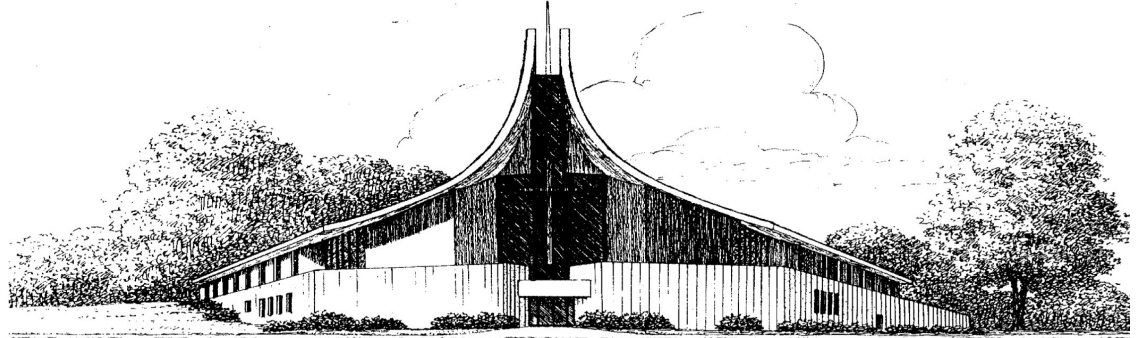




UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF DANBURY

THE FLAME

VOLUME 21
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DECEMBER
2020



FROM OUR LAY LEADER, CHRIS RUSSOCK

REFLECTIONS ON HOPE FOR ADVENT

“Be still, and know that I am God!” (Psalm 46:10). Boy, that’s a tall order! Especially at the tail end of a year where we seemed to have had little control and no compass to map out what our next steps should be. Maybe all we really can do this Advent Season is “be still.”

Yet, as the Advent candles are lit each week, we can choose to focus on their warmth; and the steadfast flame burning in the dark; and the faint smell of the pine which surrounds them that has a way of affirming that Christmas is near.

What is also especially true this year is a keen sense of yearning. We’ve spent many months with anxious feelings resting just below the surface; and confusion acting as some unwelcomed guest you wish would go home. Often, we’ve had no choice but to be still and wait for the fulfillment of God’s promise to us all.

That clear small voice has also been saying, “Do not be afraid.” A phrase repeated so many times in the Bible. My inward response this year is, “Yeah, right.” Sadly, instead of having faith in this command, I am deeply skeptical. However, I know I need to make that difficult choice. The choice which will allow me to be more hopeful and give God yet another opportunity to prove He has my back.

And so, I hope you will walk along with me this season – if only virtually – with confidence that there will be “Joy in the morning.” That the Christ Child can “make all things new.” And that the stillness we practice now will provide us with the energy, love and compassion to do God’s will in the new year.

Wishing you all many blessings.

Chris N. Russock



FROM PASTOR KIM

SELECT YOUR FAVORITE CHRISTMAS CAROL.... WRITE A DEVOTION

In the week before Christmas, we would love to send out a devotion on a beloved Christmas carol to each of our members. Therefore, I am inviting anyone who is interested to select your favorite carol, write a brief devotion, and email it back to the church no later than Tuesday, December 15.

A devotion is simple and anyone can write one. Here is what you do: Name your favorite carol, then write a paragraph or two saying why you like the carol, how it speaks to you, and what you think it is saying spiritually. You can then end your devotion with a one or two sentence prayer. We will then email one out each day in the days leading up to Christmas. This will only work if at least seven of you agree....so folks I am counting on seven of you to write a devotion.

Here is one I offer you as an example, which I wrote.

Hymn: *In the Bleak Midwinter*

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.*

*Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign.*

In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

*Angels and archangels may have gathered there, cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss, worshiped the beloved with a kiss.*

*What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part; yet what I can I give him: give my heart.*

Devotion:

A friend from a church I served in Norwalk never failed to tell me each year how much she loved this carol. It was her all-time favorite. Since it is not a carol that people typically call a favorite, I was curious why she liked it so much. She told me that she loved the meditative tune of the carol but especially the imagery: the contrast of the cold, dark, dreary days of winter with the hope and light of the good news of the birth of Christ. That contrast was compelling to her. Her interest in this carol made me want to take a closer look at it. I found myself drawn to verse 4: *“What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were shepherd, I would bring a lamb. If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part; yet what can I give him: give my heart.”*

These words are very meaningful in that they remind us that Jesus deserves the best we have to offer. And that everyone from the lowly shepherds to the wise kings know to make themselves humble before God. But even more important, on days when we feel we don't have much to offer, we can always offer the most important thing: the gift of our heart, our love. And that is what Jesus wants the most. And it is the most priceless gift we have to offer.

Prayer:

Dear God, We are made humble in the face of all that you offer us. Help us give your son the most important thing we have to offer this Christmas: the gift of our heart, holding nothing back. **Amen.**



JOIN US FOR ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

WORSHIP



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6 - 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10:30AM WORSHIP ON-LINE VIA YOUTUBE

“PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD”

PASTOR KIM PREACHING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 - 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10:30AM WORSHIP ON-LINE VIA YOUTUBE

PASTOR KIM PREACHING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 - 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10:30AM WORSHIP ON-LINE VIA YOUTUBE

“MARY’S SUNDAY: LET IT BE ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORLD”

PASTOR KIM PREACHING

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24 - CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 PM - CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP ON-LINE VIA YOUTUBE

CAROLS & CANDLELIGHT; SPECIAL MUSIC, CHILDREN’S MESSAGE;

PASTOR KIM PREACHING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27 - 1ST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

10:30AM WORSHIP ON-LINE VIA YOUTUBE

PASTOR KIM PREACHING

***** PLEASE NOTE: ALL SERVICES WILL BE ONLINE. *****

INFORMATION WILL BE SENT TO YOU AHEAD OF TIME

WITH THE LINK TO OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL



Dear Friends,

It would be lovely if we could all be together this time of year but since we can't, let's at least plan to get together for a Christmas Fellowship hour by Zoom **this Sunday, December 13 at 12:00 noon.** We will have a chance to catch up and everyone is asked to plan to share a favorite Christmas memory.

Please see below for instructions for how to Zoom with us.
Looking forward to seeing you Sunday!

Here are instructions:

Topic: CHRISTMAS FELLOWSHIP

Time: Sunday, December 13, 2020 12:00noon

To join Zoom Meeting by computer, tablet or smart phone:

<https://umcom.zoom.us/j/92442815064>

Meeting ID: 924 4281 5064

To join Zoom Meeting by telephone:

Dial 1 929 205 6099

Meeting ID: 924 4281 5064

Zoom is fairly easy to use but it takes awhile to get used to new technology. If for whatever reason you are having difficulty getting connected, call the church office at 203-743-1503. Patti and I will be coordinating the logistics of the meeting through the church computers, and we will pay attention to the phones in case anyone has difficulty connecting to Zoom.

Lastly, the link for accessing the Sunday worship service will be emailed to you tomorrow.

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Kin



JOEY MASOOD'S EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

Joey Masood has blessed our church with the creation of a prayer labyrinth in the Memorial Garden for his Eagle Scout Project. He built a walkway to the garden, stained the existing bench and cross and built extra benches for seating. The prayer labyrinth is made of bricks and is meant to be a quiet place to walk and meditate and pray.

Here are some instructions on how to walk through a labyrinth:

*Open your senses and focus on the process of taking slow and deliberate steps. Bring to mind a **prayer** or spiritual question to contemplate during the **walk** to the center. Reaching the center, pause to reflect, **pray**, and listen for an answer or for deeper revelation. Now begin the return journey.*

Our labyrinth will also be added to the worldwide labyrinth finder, so others in the area may be able to find it and use it for their own spiritual needs and prayer.

THANK YOU JOEY FOR A WONDERFUL ENHANCEMENT TO OUR CHURCH



Photos by Tonya Clark

JOEY MASOOD'S EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT



Photos by
Tonya Clark

Christmas Poinsettias 2020



Even though Christmas Eve worship will have to be virtual this year, we are offering people the opportunity to purchase a poinsettia to place on the altar for the Christmas Eve service. Remember, the purpose of the flowers are not for our viewing but to honor God and lift up the spiritual significance of Christmas.

To keep things simple and streamlined, this is how we are going to do it:

The only color selection will be red. The cost will again be \$10.

All orders MUST be in by 4 p.m. on Saturday, December 11.

Your order must include your check and, if you wish, your designation in memory and honor of someone.

Options for drop off/payment:

- ◆ Bring to the Church Office
- ◆ Drop off in our secure mail box
- ◆ Complete the process online, including payment and flower designation
[CLICK HERE process your flower order online.](#)

Pick up time will be announced later, it will likely be before or on Christmas Eve, so you can enjoy your flowers at home for Christmas.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY - DEADLINE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2020

Your Name _____ Telephone # _____

Total # Plants _____

Amount Enclosed _____ Check # _____ Cash _____

Flowers given in honor of: _____

Flowers given in memory of: _____

COVENANT TO CARE THANKSGIVING PROJECT



Helping Connecticut's Children in Need.

As you probably know, we were not able to fill grocery bags for Thanksgiving this year because of concerns with Covid19. Instead we were asked to give gift cards to local grocery stores.

I am so pleased to report that we collected \$1000.00 in grocery gift cards. Our social worker was thrilled to receive them and wanted me to convey her sincere appreciation. This is a very difficult time for many of her clients and our generosity helped relieve some of the stress in their lives.

Thank you to all of you who participated in this outreach. Not only did we help put food on tables but we were blessed to be able to share our blessings and God's love! I am truly grateful to be a part of such a loving, caring and generous congregation.

Blessings,
Phyllis Tranzillo



I want to thank everyone that donated money, toys, and clothes for the Salvation Army's ANGEL TREE Project. This project benefits children in the Danbury area. There will be some happy children on Christmas morning! Thank you so much!

Bev Anderson



13TH MONTH OF GIVING

We offer our deepest gratitude to those who have participated in this year's only Fundraiser: **13th month of Giving**. As our Finance Committee explained in October, we adopted this program following the lead of several other UM churches. Because we lost literally all of our fundraisers this calendar year (totaling around \$20,000) due to the pandemic, as well as the smaller sum from our building users, it really makes finishing the year on solid financial footing a challenge.

Because many of you donate your time and material resources to our fundraisers, we asked you to consider making an extra contribution to the church equaling the amount of one month of your giving, or any amount you can offer. Hence, the title, **13th Month of Giving**. We are still accepting donations through the month of December. You may give by sending your check in to the church, dropping it off in our secure mailbox, and donating online.

*Please write: **13th Month of Giving** on your check.*

We are so grateful for your ongoing generosity!

Grace and Peace,
Your Finance Team



TRASH PICK UP SUSPENDED THROUGH MID-FEBRUARY

Your Trustees are always looking for ways to save the church money. Because the next few months at the church are likely to be quiet ones with little activity in the building, the Trustees have decided to save money by suspending trash pick up from December 15 through mid February. Since there are no building users in our building and the only activity in the building is currently staff and the worship taping crew, this should not impact anyone adversely.

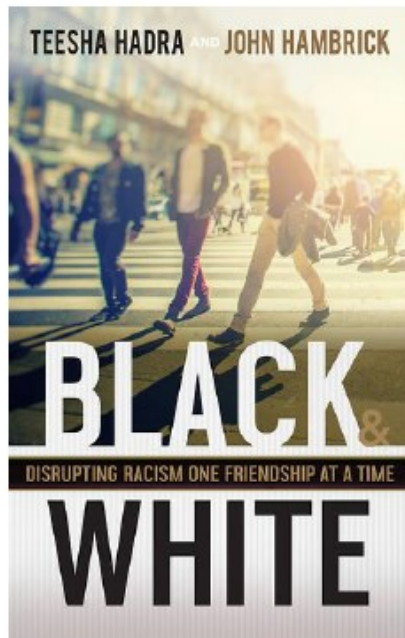


However, if for some reason you are using the building for any activity, you will need to take your own trash home. Leaving it in our containers will present a health hazard as there will be no pick-up for the next two months.



Thank you for your cooperation in our ongoing efforts to be good stewards of our financial resources.

2021 LAITY CELEBRATION



Colossians 3:14

Our Laity Celebration will be held via Zoom on Saturday, January 16, 2021.

Study Book: We will be studying the book *Black & White: Disrupting Racism One Friendship at a Time*, by Teesha Hadra & John Hambrick. Please purchase your copy (at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Christianbook.com) early, so that you will have time to read it before the event.

Register at: <https://ny-reg.brtaapp.com/2021LaityConvocation7171>

If you have questions, you may contact Roena Littlejohn at 203-331-9653 or Roena.Littlejohn@nyac-umc.com.

You will receive a link to join the meeting a few days prior to the event.

January 16, 2021 10AM – 2PM

This is a virtual event.



**NY ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**
20 Soundview Ave.
White Plains NY 10606
914-997-1570
www.nyac.com

Don't miss Bishop Thomas Bickerton's address to the Laity at this special event!

**BEST WISHES AND GOD'S BLESSINGS
TO THOSE
CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS IN**



Betty Zeigler	December 1
Allison McWilliams	December 3
Clarence Holston	December 4
Edgar March	December 4
Bishop Rouse II	December 4
Kathy Curran	December 6
Debbie Davis	December 6
Leslie Gartland	December 8
Robert Fulton	December 10
Phyllis Tranzillo	December 11
Joan Eaton	December 15
Carol Spaulding	December 16
Martin Zahara	December 17
Joseph Rouse	December 18
Vincent Kempter	December 21
Kimberly Bosley	December 26
Chris Ziegler	December 27



*Merry Christmas and
God's Blessings for
the New Year!*



*From
The United Methodist Church of Danbury
Administrative Council and Trustees
Reverend Kim Bosley, Pastor
Andrew Levine, Music Director
Patti Cohen-Hecht, Administrator*

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF DANBURY

OUR MISSION

WE ARE A WELCOMING FAMILY OF DISCIPLES
WHO SEEK TO STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH AND
ALLOW THE LIGHT OF CHRIST TO GUIDE US
AS WE SERVE OUR COMMUNITY.

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF DANBURY

5 CLAPBOARD RIDGE ROAD, DANBURY, CT 06811

PHONE: 203-743-1503

WEBSITE: WWW.DANBURYMETHODIST.ORG

EMAIL: DANBURYUMC@SBCGLOBAL.NET



MINISTERS: THE CONGREGATION

PASTOR: REV. KIMBERLY A. BOSLEY

MUSIC DIRECTOR: ANDREW LEVINE

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR: PATTI COHEN-HECHT

LAY LEADER: CHRIS RUSSOCK

DECEMBER 2020 FLAME

EDITORS: PASTOR KIM BOSLEY AND PATTI COHEN-HECHT

CONTRIBUTORS: PASTOR KIM, BEV ANDERSON, TONYA CLARK, CHRIS RUSSOCK AND
PHYLLIS TRANZILLO