

WEST CHELMSFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

242 Main Street, North Chelmsford, MA 01863

Pastor: Rev. A. Mack Hagins

Tele. # 978-251-4834 email: office@wcumc.us

Church website:wcumc.us



*WCUMC Faith, Family, and Future are the
Cornerstones of this nurturing community.*

**DECEMBER 2015
NEWSLETTER**

From the Pastor's Desk

"I promise." How many times in your life have you heard those two words? **"I promise"**. We heard them as small children when our parents promised to take us for ice cream later in the day. "We can't go right now, but we'll go later this afternoon – **I promise.**" We heard those words when a playmate wanted us to take turns at some game. "I get to do it first, then you get a turn – **I promise.**" Of course, that may have been when some of us learned that promises are not always kept, that just because your playmate said "I promise" doesn't necessarily mean that you will get a turn after all. Some of us heard **I promise**, or words that meant the same thing, as we stood in front of a church or other worship setting with the person we love. We heard that person say that they promised to take us as their husband or wife, and promised to love and to cherish us.

One thing we have all learned through our lives is that promises are sometimes kept and sometimes broken. And we have learned that the best indicator of whether a promise will be kept is **who is making the promise.**

The season of Advent begins with a promise. God promised God's people that God would send a messiah, a leader to restore the fortunes of the people and establish justice and righteousness. We Christians believe that promise was fulfilled in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. You see, the One making the promise was God, who is always faithful and always keeps promises.

During this Advent and Christmas season, may the promise of God's love and salvation be fulfilled in your life as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ together.

Reverend Mack





ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

The Advent and Christmas seasons offer many ways to remember and re-live the story of the promises of God and the birth of Jesus Christ. Plan to be present as our church observes these special seasons. (All descriptions apply to both 9:30 and 11:00am services.)

December 6 – Second Sunday of Advent – “Wait! Get ready!” - The Senior Choir will be at both services.
Holy Communion.

December 13 – Third Sunday of Advent – “Rejoice! The path of lights” - The Festival Ringers will be at both services.

December 20 – Fourth Sunday of Advent – “Behold” – The Choral Cantata, presented by our Senior Choir.
“How Great Our Joy!” by Lloyd Larson and Douglas Wagner 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.

December 24 – **Christmas Eve Candlelight services at 6:00, 8:00 and 10:00 p.m.** The 6:00 p.m. service is geared toward children. The services will feature Christmas carols, a brass ensemble at the 8:00 and 10:00 p.m. services.

December 25th – *Merry Christmas*

December 27th – **Only one service at 9:30am. No Sunday School classes – children worship with family.**

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### Christmas Cantata *Sunday December 20<sup>th</sup> at both 9:30 and 11:00 am services!*

This year we are reprising a cantata first presented in 2004, “How Great Our Joy!” by Lloyd Larson and Douglas Wagner. As we experience the Christmas story again this year, we are reminded that Jesus came for all people – young and old, powerful and weak, educated and uneducated, wealthy and poor, those living close by and those living in the most distant locations of our world. May that message rekindle joy in our hearts as we celebrate the fulfillment of God’s promise: “The Word became flesh and lived among us.”

*(John 1:14)*

Karen Leonard, Minister of Music

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Missions Committee –Angel Tree

The Missions Committee thanks all those that have taken a tag from our “Angel Tree”. Please return the gifts unwrapped and with the tag. There are collection boxes for the gifts in the education building entrance. We need the gifts returned by December 10 so that the Salvation Army can distribute them in time for Christmas.

Any packaged “re-gifts” you might like to donate will happily be accepted also.

Thank you - Any questions, please call Robin Orford, 978-692-1087 or email at orfrobin@gmail.com.



Missions Committee



HOLIDAY



Holiday Fair
Saturday December 5th - 9 am to 3 pm

Please come and shop in a stress free atmosphere! Thank you for making our fair a success!

Don't forget to bring the kids to the Christian-Ed sponsored Kids Room. Kids can have fun watching doing crafts and having fun – all while you shop!!

As always, our Professional craft vendors will be offering a great selection of gifts this year! We have new crafts people joining us this year with new, unique gifts!!!

We will have beautiful hand-made gifts, jewelry (crystal, beaded, silver and polymer clay), toys and much more! Stop by our breakfast bistro for a hot cup of gourmet coffee & homemade treats. Take a break at our luncheon featuring hot, homemade lunch. As always, we'll have hand made candies, pies, breads & treats, crafts and white elephant bargains!

Craft donations

Please deliver your craft donations to the church office or to Elsie Wilson's (75 Oak Hill Road, 692-8939) by Friday, December 4th. Please price each item with a suggested price.

Food donations

Donations for the food table can be delivered to the church the week of the fair. The church will be open on Wed Dec. 2nd 9-1pm or 7:30-9pm, Thurs Dec. 3rd 6:30-8:30pm, Friday Dec. 4th 9-3pm or Saturday Dec. 5th between 8 and 9 am.



Candy donations

Please drop candy donations at the church office or at Alice Howard's (9 Polley Rd, Westford) by Thursday, Dec 3rd.



If you have not filled out a pledge card and need one – they are located on the table in the narthex. You can drop it in the offering plate or mail it to the church.

Thank you, The Finance Committee

Christian Education News

Coming Soon!

Children's Room at the Holiday Fair

Our annual holiday fair is on December 5th this year from 9am – 3pm. The Christian Education will be sponsoring the Children's Room again this year. We will have crafts and other activities available for children to work on while parents shop/volunteer at the fair. If you are volunteering at the fair and expect that your child will be in the Children's Room for a long period of time, please let Sarah Laflamme know so that arrangements can be made to have the additional activities ready.

Winter Epiphany Festival

Mark your calendars for January 9th when we will celebrate the winter season and the start of Epiphany. Starting at 3:30pm we will have some outside activities including snowmen building (snow permitting). Then we will have a bonfire with roasting marshmallows and hot dogs over the fire. We will finish out the night with some indoor Epiphany activities and then head home by 5:30pm. If you have any questions please speak with a member of the Christian Education Committee.

What's happening in SS?

Unit 3: Birthing a Blessing

Unit 3 takes the Sunday school students through the first 2 seasons of the Christian Year (Advent and Christmas) and into the third (Epiphany). Each has its own color and mood. Advent is a time of waiting and anticipation. Christmas is a time of celebration and arrival. The Season after Epiphany is a time of new manifestations of God's presence in Jesus and a growing awareness and spreading of the light that Jesus brought into the world. We will end this unit with the Baptism of Jesus Sunday on January 10. We will all worship together in the sanctuary for this important Sunday in the Christian Year.

Worshipping on Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve we have three opportunities for worship. All three services will have the same format, but the music at the 6pm service will be presented by the children's and youth choirs. The music at the 8pm and 10pm services will be presented by the Festival Ringers and the Senior Choir. A special brass group will also take part in the 8pm and 10pm services. Children are welcome at any of the services and there will be a special gift activity for kids 5th grade and under to do during which ever service they attend.



Connecting with Christ

Daily Prayer During the Holidays

As we move into the holiday season, finding time to slow down can be difficult. One way to help yourself slowdown is to include prayer in your daily routine. You can even use everyday items to help you remember to take a moment to slowdown and pray. For example, every time you see a table, stop and say the following prayer:

God, thank you for my friends and family. Help me remember to spend time with the people I love. Amen.
You may find that your holidays are less stressful if you take an extra moment to pray.

If you have any questions or comments about our Christian Education Program please contact:

Sarah Laflamme
Christian Education Director
Christian-ed@wcumc.us
603-888-1003

Harry Johnson
Chairperson, CE Committee
johnson3rd@verizon.net
978-251-8587



Christmas Poinsettias

Christmas Poinsettias - It is time again to order your poinsettia for our Christmas altar. We will have all the poinsettias on the altar **Sunday December 20th for our 9:30 and 11:00a.m. services and then you can take your flower after the second service.** All poinsettias given to a shut-in will be kept for our Christmas Eve Services and then delivered.

This year we have preordered just Red and White poinsettias. Place your order soon!

Size – 7” pot, \$11.00

Order Today! Call Diana Bard at 978-692-7668

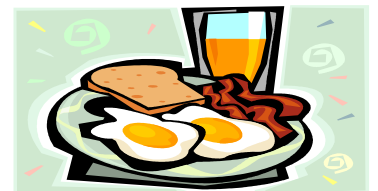
The new Flower Calendar for 2016 is on the wall in the entryway. Please select a favorite date and write your name and phone number. The flower arrangement each Sunday is \$30. Make your check payable to the church with a notation that it is for the altar flowers. Any questions call Diana Bard at 978-692-7668.

Men - The Sunshine Breakfast Club

The Men’s Breakfast Club meets the second Tuesday of the month. We will be meeting at the Comets Restaurant on Tuesday, December 8th at 9:00am. The Comets Restaurant is located at 22 Westford Road (near Sullivan’s Ice Cream) Tyngsboro.

We enjoy the food and friendly conversation. All men who are retired, semi-retired or just have a morning off are invited to join us. **All Welcome!**

If you have any questions please call Larry Estelle. 978-251-4508. **See you on Tuesday, December 8th.**



The Morning Glories



The Morning Glories will meet on December 17th at 10:00am. All women are invited to attend the December meeting of the Morning Glories in the church's vestry (beneath the sanctuary). In honor of the Christmas season, you are asked to bring a poem, short story, memory, song or anything else that speaks to you of the meaning of Christmas, and we will share these. Also, we'll discuss what we love about the season and the things we - well - really

DON'T love! Finally, if each woman will bring 1 dozen of a favorite Christmas cookie, we can make up take-home boxes with a variety of cookies for each participant. Hope you can be there!

Questions? Call Lynda at 978-677-6956

Please - We Need Your Help!

We are a church that recycles. A big thanks to Eli Solodiuk for taking care of the recycle bins and keeping us on track. He does a great job! Now the rest of us need to do our part. There are recycle bins in the church entry, choir room, vestry, education wing entry, fellowship hall, kitchen, and office. We are asking **everyone** to please put all paper, cardboard boxes, plastic boxes, cans and any other recyclable items in one of those bins! If a box is too large for the bin, please break it down and put it in one of the large recycle cans by the back door or take them home to put out with your recycle "junk". If we all do our part, we save the church money (we have to pay to have the dumpster tipped), and our junk provides jobs for other businesses. So **please, NO MORE RECYCLABLES IN THE TRASH!**



Also remember, when you leave a room, turn off the lights, turn down the thermostat if there is one, and close the door.

These are all GOOD HABITS we all need to practice. We save resources and money.

Thank you for your cooperation.



HOLIDAY HANDBELL CONCERT!

Save The Date!

Saturday January 2, 2016 - 7 pm - Merrimack Valley Ringers will present their annual holiday concert! Again this year it will be held at the **Chelmsford Center for the Arts**, 1A North Road, Chelmsford, MA - across from the town common and Unitarian Church.

MVR is thrilled to have been invited back to perform in the Chelmsford Center for the Arts. This year we are collaborating with the New England Flute Orchestra on several selections. Each ensemble will also perform on their own. Tickets are \$10 adults/\$5 students and may be purchased at www.chelmsfordarts.org or at the door. MVR hopes our loyal West Chelmsford UMC audience will travel to Chelmsford Center to celebrate the end of the Christmas season.

Audience wanted!!

In preparation for their 10-concert holiday tour during December/January, MVR is planning their final rehearsal on

Monday November 30th to be an open dress rehearsal at 7:30 pm in the WCUMC sanctuary. The ringers are seeking an audience for this rehearsal to simulate a true concert experience. If you are unable to attend any of the scheduled concert dates or if you just can't get enough of handbells and MVR, they welcome you to this free, full-concert performance to help them kick off their concert season.



Karen E. Leonard
Artistic Director - Merrimack Valley Ringers

Inspiration Corner



The Gold Wrapping Paper - An Inspirational Short Christmas Story

Once upon a time, there was a man who worked very hard just to keep food on the table for his family. This particular year a few days before Christmas, he punished his little five-year-old daughter after learning that she had used up the family's only roll of expensive gold wrapping paper.

As money was tight, he became even more upset when on Christmas Eve he saw that the child had used all of the expensive gold paper to decorate one shoebox she had put under the Christmas tree. He also was concerned about where she had gotten money to buy what was in the shoebox.

Nevertheless, the next morning the little girl, filled with excitement, brought the gift box to her father and said, "This is for you, Daddy!"

As he opened the box, the father was embarrassed by his earlier overreaction, now regretting how he had punished her.

But when he opened the shoebox, he found it was empty and again his anger flared. "Don't you know, young lady," he said harshly, "when you give someone a present, there's supposed to be something inside the package!"

The little girl looked up at him with sad tears rolling from her eyes and whispered: "Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was all full."

The father was crushed. He fell on his knees and put his arms around his precious little girl. He begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later. It is told that the father kept this little gold box by his bed for all the years of his life. Whenever he was discouraged or faced difficult problems, he would open the box, take out an imaginary kiss, and remember the love of this beautiful child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given an invisible golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and God. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.

-- Anonymous

Thank You

West Chelmsford UMC,

Thank you so much for the prayer shawl. It was a wonderful surprise that has already provided me with such comfort. As I go through this life challenge, I have found comfort and hope in returning to my family church and being reminded of God's love and forgiveness.

Thank you for providing this haven and the wonderful prayer shawl.

Nancy O'Neil

Mission Committee News



This year the committee chose to support Catie's Closet with \$500 of our mission budget. Catie's Closet is a non-profit organization that collects and distributes clothing and basic toiletry items to students who are homeless as well as students

who may be experiencing severe financial hardships. Catie's Closets are located in schools so that all students' needs are met immediately through the social workers or school staff within each school.

Their "Back on the Bus" program helps students who live beyond walking distance to Lowell High School by supplying bus tokens and/or monthly passes to students in need.

Catie's Closets are located in most of the Lowell Schools and in some schools in Hudson, NH.

For more info check out www.catiescloset.org.

The latest newsletter, ***News from Nicaragua***, from Belinda Forbes, the missionary we support in Nicaragua, is posted in the lobby to the classroom building. Take a moment to check it out, if you haven't already.

Protestant Campus Ministry at UMASS-Lowell

The Rev. Imogene Stulken, Protestant Campus Minister, dropped us a line to let us know what is up on campus. She tells us that at a worship on Sunday afternoon in the fall, a new international student expressed gratitude for the weekly 4:30PM service, saying it has helped him while he is separated from his wife and children, who are still in his home country. In addition to the weekly service on Sunday, there is now, on Tuesdays a "Drop-in Prayer and Quiet Time" and Wednesdays an event called "S.P.A.C.E.: Spiritual Practices and Centering Experiences."



For sale

A clarinet came in for the Rummage Sale, and it is still available. It is probably a student model for someone just starting out. Please, if you or anyone you know could use one; call Elsie at 978-692-8939 or the church office 978-251-4834 for information. Thank you

January 2016 Newsletter – All articles are due by December 21st





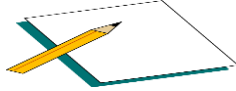
Prayer List

In the Sunday bulletin under “Let us remember these people in our prayers,” we list those with prayer needs. Our Monthly Newsletter carries a list of more “on-going” concerns to bring to God in Prayer.

We will keep the description you provide as general or specific as you indicate. Please let us know what you would like included. We also encourage you to clip out these names and keep them in your prayers.

If you would like your name to be added or removed from any of the prayer lists, please contact the church office.

It’s never too late for a note, a card, or a call.



Those who are at home or in nursing homes:

Edna Macpherson – At home
Lee and Wally Reid – At home
Lenore Reynolds – Sunny Acres, Chelmsford
Pat Rienstra – Life Care Center of Nashoba Valley, Littleton, MA
Gladys Angus – At home
Foster Comstock – At home

Prayer list for on-going health needs:

Ken Weinbeck
Judi Hill
Amy Connell’s cousin
Jen Weinbeck’s friends, Mike and Sarah
Margaret Wilkinson’s niece, Julie
Rebecca Markey’s brother, Dennis Woodruff
Larry Estelle’s brother, Jay

Church Office Information



- The Church Office is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (978-251-4834)
- We have 4 E-mail addresses: office@wcumc.us – for general church business.
revmack@wcumc.us – e-mail for Rev Mack
music@wcumc.us – for Karen Leonard, Music Minister
sarah.laflamme@gmail.com – for Sarah Laflamme, Christian Ed Director
- Our Website is wcumc.us
- Items for the church bulletin insert are due in the church office by **Wednesday morning**.
- Items for the monthly Newsletter are due in the church office on the third Monday of each month. **All articles must be signed**

December

2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:30pm-Christian Ed Meeting	2 7pm-Boy Scouts 7:30pm-Festival Ringers	3 6:30pm-Children Choir 7:30pm-Senior Choir	4 4pm-Girl Scouts Church fair set-up	5 9:00am – 3:00pm <i>Church Fair</i> 
6 9:30&11am-Worship & Nursery Care 9:30am-Sunday School 10:30am- Fellowship 4pm-Jr. MYF-go to Acton	7 5:00pm-Girl Scouts 7:30pm-Evangelism 7:30pm-A.A.	8 9:00am-Sunshine Breakfast Club 7:30pm-Staff/Parish	9 7pm-Boy Scouts 7:30pm-Festival Ringers	10 6:30pm-Webelos 6:30pm-Children Choir 7:30pm-Senior Choir	11 4pm-Girl Scouts	12
13 9:30&11am-Worship & Nursery care 9:30am-Sunday School 10:30am- Fellowship 6:45pm-Sr. MYF-go to shopping	14 5pm-Girl Scouts 7:30pm-Festival Ringers 7:30pm-Finance 7:30pm-Trustees 7:30pm - A.A.	15	16 7pm-Boy Scouts 7pm-Church Conference	17 10am-Morning Glories 7pm-Bear Den 6:30pm-Children Choir 8:30pm-Senior Choir	18 4pm-Girl Scouts 7pm-Cub Scout pack meeting	19 2-5pm-sanctuary And fellowship hall In use.
20 9:30&11am-Worship & Nursery care 9:30am-Sunday School 10:30am- Fellowship 6:45pm-Sr. MYF	21 7:30pm-Administrative Board 7:30pm - A.A.	22	23 7:30pm-Festival Ringers St. Paul's Meal at Eliot Presbyterian	24 <i>Candlelight Services</i> 6:00,8:00 & 10:00pm 	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i> 	26
27 9:30am – One Worship Service	28 5:00pm-Girl Scouts 7:30pm-A.A.	29	30 7:00pm-Boy Scouts	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>		

Rehearsal – Celebration Ringers/Singers – 12:30pm on December 13

Rehearsal – Celebration Ringers – 4:30pm - Celebration Singers – 5:45pm on December 20th