



The Branchline

"I am the vine, you are the branches."

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December 2019

Wilbraham United
Church
500 Main St.
Wilbraham, MA 01095

A Note from Pastor Chip

The Holiday season, as I have come to understand it, begins with Thanksgiving and ends with New Year's Day: secular holidays more well-known for football games than anything else. Perhaps at our Thanksgiving table, we listed a blessing or two for which we were grateful. Maybe, as we close out 2019, we will resolve to become more like the person we imagine ourselves being. The Holiday season opens with a holiday in which we celebrate how blessed we are, and closes with an opportunity to see how we might become a blessing.

On **December 1st**, the Church will enter the season of **Advent**, a time in which we both commemorate the impending arrival of the baby Jesus in Bethlehem, and also anticipate the second coming of Christ. We celebrate the moment at which God came to us, and God's abiding presence with us and God's promise to return.

We will offer our own extravagant welcome – sharing love, fellowship, and (of course!) cookies – with visitors from near and far, at our **Holly Fair on December 14th**.

In the darkness of the night, a light shined over Bethlehem and gave hope to all who saw it. For those who struggle to see the light and feel its warmth and love, we will offer a **Longest Night Service on December 18th at 7pm at Christ the King-Epiphany Church**.

We will hear the Christmas story told by our youth, full of enthusiasm and wonder, at our **Christmas Pageant during worship on December 22rd**.

And we will celebrate our joy on **Christmas Eve, at our family service at 4pm and our service of Lessons and Carols at 7pm**. We will sing the familiar tunes in our worship services, raising a joyful noise to the Lord. We will share the light of Christ, from one candle to another, around our sanctuary. We will hear the Good News of prophecy made reality, of the coming of Jesus Christ to God's people.

The world was blessed through the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, Emmanuel, which means "God with Us." Let us count the ways in which we have been blessed by God. And let us also resolve to become blessings to the world, for the glory of God. Let us go out into God's world and, in response to what we have been given, choose to give more. Let us take to heart God's call for us to love, mindful of the love God showed us in Jesus. In our coming and our going, in our living and our loving, in our giving and our receiving, may we not only remember the blessings we have received from God, but may we increase them in this world, following in the ways of Jesus Christ, and delighting in the will of God. This holiday season, joyfully open the gifts under the tree, and also joyfully share the gifts of the Holy Spirit that live in your heart with the world.

Blessings,
Chip

News from the Choir Room

On Sunday, December 8, the 2nd Sunday in Advent, we will have Meadow Winds playing in our worship service. This is a flute quartet comprised four local women, one of whom is Karen McCarthy, a frequent participant in our music ministry. Mark your calendars and don't miss this special music in our worship service.

It's Pageant time again.

Our annual Christmas Pageant will be on December 22 during the 10:00 AM worship service. It includes angels and shepherds, a plethora of animals, our choirs, handbells, trumpets, flutes, drums, kings, baby Jesus and more. It is as much fun and just as inspirational to be a participant as it is to be an observer. Please consider being a participant. We need all kinds of help; things like the lead cow, camel pushers, prompters, sound effects and angel herding. Kim Neelans makes this thing run like clockwork from the back of the church making it a NO stress, easy time for all. Plus we put it together in just ONE rehearsal. (well maybe two if you count a 15 minute after church part-assignment session). Whether you take an active role or sit in the pews that morning; just come and experience this exuberant re-telling of our Christmas Story.

Sunday, December 15, after church in the sanctuary – part assignments.

Saturday, December 21 10:00 to 11:00 AM – Pageant rehearsal and costume distribution

Sunday, December 22, 10:00 AM CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



“It is good to give God thanks and praise”



Our Loaves and Fishes Ministry

For many, many years our church has been involved with Loaves & Fishes in Springfield. At first we prepared & served one meal a year. Then Betsy Johnsen suggested we prepare & serve a meal each month. Stuart & she became involved at that point.

In recent years Stuart prepares 6 very large casseroles of chicken/rice & vegetables that are popular w/our guests at South Congregational Church. Nancy Peck is in charge of getting volunteers to serve on the 3rd Thursday noon of each month. Judy Hoffman finds bakers who are willing to bake a 9 by 13 inch cake each month. (The cakes are also popular.)

We would like to have a few more volunteers to help us serve on the third Thursdays of the month. It does not have to be an every month commitment. We send out an email every month to see who is available from our list of volunteers. We need between 4-6 people each month. If you would like to be put on our email list, please send an email to ncpeck10@gmail.com or call or speak to Nancy Peck.



Outreach News

How Donations from United Church Are Making a Difference in the Fight Against Homelessness

Wilbraham United Church generously donated \$4,000 to the Mental Health Association (MHA) and this pioneering nonprofit organization is pleased to share with us some of the ways this donation is at work. Since the donation was made, Dave Havens, Program Director of Homeless Services for MHA, and his team have successfully moved six people who were living on the street or in shelter into permanent housing. These are folks who had been long term chronically homeless.

“This is not easy work,” said Dave. “It’s not work meant for everybody. You can’t give up on these folks and ‘no’ isn’t an option. Our role is straightforward: to help people get housed and stay housed. MHA has a variety of person-centric, need-specific programs, and each of them applies the principles of Housing First to ensure that all people have access to safe and affordable housing, regardless of their individual challenges.”

One expression of compassion is respecting the privacy of an individual in need. Their names have been changed, but their stories are real.

Timothy

“Timothy” had been long-term homeless, on and off, for decades, but he got into housing and was stable. He wasn’t doing anything to upset his tenancy, but unfortunately he had to move because his apartment complex was undergoing renovation. “It’s a sad irony that once his place is renovated, the rent will go up and his rent subsidy will no longer cover the cost,” said Dave Havens, Program Director of Homeless Services for MHA.”

Dave recognized Timothy’s name from back in the 1980s when he established the Homeless Outreach Team for the City of Springfield. Timothy has major mental illness, and like people facing similar struggles, he often has attempted a less stigmatizing way to manage it: by using street drugs versus being a mental health patient. “You have to view the idea of stigma as they see it from their world,” said Dave. “Part of what we do is listen to people. If part of their recovery is to change how they view things, they need help to discover from their own perspective how that change can happen.”

Dave says that people are often quite guarded with what they’re willing to share, particularly if their memories are painful. “We don’t always have the chance to get their fuller story, but that can change as we work with them over time, gain their trust and help them keep moving forward. These may seem like small successes, but in time they can be life changing.”

To learn more or do more, please contact Kim Lee at 413-233-5343 or klee@mhainc.org

Have you remembered your church in your Planned Giving?

One charitable gift provides a lifetime of benefits. Your gift will sustain current ministries and create future programs while reflecting your faith and values.

A bequest is one of the easiest gifts to make. With the help of an advisor, you can include language in your will or trust specifying a gift be made to family, friends or Wilbraham United Church as part of your estate plan. If you are interested in making a bequest to the church, please speak to Pastor Chip or a member of the Finance Commission.

Heifer International

Fighting Hunger for the Holidays

The Outreach Commission will be asking for donations to benefit the global nonprofit organization Heifer International on Sundays in December. Heifer International works to reduce poverty and hunger through holistic community development. This includes distributing animals as well training to families in need around the world as a means of providing self-sufficiency. Please join us after church on December 8th, 15th, or the 22nd to support this cause!



On December 8th, Women's Evening Fellowship's annual Angel Tree will be in the narthex. Each Angel will have a child's name and suggestion for a \$20.00 Christmas gift. The gifts, wrapped, will be collected on December 15th. Social workers will distribute the gifts to children in Springfield. Angels may be pre-ordered from Phyllis Walsh pwalsh44@charter.net



Wilbraham United Church Nursery School

Are you or is someone you know looking for a quality preschool program? Wilbraham United Church Nursery School offers specialized preschool and pre-K programs for children between the ages of 2.9 and 5.

Currently, the preschool has openings in both the Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten programs. We offer a creative curriculum that includes music, yoga, Spanish and much more!

Contact us today to set up a visit or to learn some more information about this unique Program!

**Wilbraham United Nursery
School**

500 Main Street
Wilbraham, MA 01095
413-536-2511 ext. 108

The Thrift Shop
At Wilbraham United Church

The Thrift Shop News

The Thrift Shop continues to thrive due to the generous donations we Received. Please think of us if you have any items we can use,

As a thank you to our dedicated volunteers we hosted a luncheon in November as a heartfelt thank you for their dedication.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact either Donna Carlson or Nancy Krawczynshi.

The Thrift Shop hours are Friday and Saturdays from 9:30am - 12:30pm. Please stop by any weekend we would love to see you!

#Never Pay Retail



AED/CPR/”STOP THE BLEED” TRAINING NOW AVAILABLE



WHEN

Two options: Sunday Dec 8, 1-3 PM or
Monday Dec 9, 10 AM-12 PM

INSTRUCTOR

Matthew Sterling from Wilbraham Emergency Medical Response

WHERE

WUC Fellowship Hall

WHO

Open to church members of all ages. No previous CPR or first aid training required.

COST

Free (paid thanks to donations to the AED Fund)

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

This class is designed for lay people and provides training in basic CPR, use of the AED, and first aid for severe bleeding. The focus is learning in a no-stress environment so skills are easily understood and remembered. There are no tests or certification, but you will walk away empowered to respond to an emergency.

HOW TO SIGN UP

Call or email the church office at 596-2511 or admin@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org. Sign up early, class size is limited.

QUESTIONS?

Email or speak to Nan Shepard (sshep48622@aol.com) or Carol Piel (carolpiel@gmail.com).

The Holly Fair will be Saturday, December 14 from 9-3!

This is our biggest fundraiser of the year and we need EVERYONE'S help!!! Please start thinking about what YOU can do to help! We need help in the following areas: greeters the day of the fair, cookie bakers, help in the kitchen, help with moving and clean up, parking help, PR and advertising, help with the raffle, and more!

**Information can be found on our website under the Holly Fair tab. www.wilbrahamunitedchurch.org.
Questions can be emailed to wuchurchevents@gmail.com**

Please contact Tammy Trudeau with any questions:

wotrudeau@charter.net or 413-575-0416.





Holiday Shopping Card News

**PLEASE buy your holiday gift cards from our church!
Give them as gifts, or use them for your own shopping!**

We will be carrying the following gift cards for the holiday season and will be available for purchase on Sundays...

Cold Stone Creamery
Gap/Old Navy/Athleta/Banana Republic
iTunes
Land's End
LL Bean
Macy's
Pottery Barn/Williams-Sonoma

All in addition to our current inventory such as...

Amazon, Barnes&Noble, Home Goods/Marshall's/TJMaxx, Cinemark, Regal Cinemas, Kohl's, Lowe's, Starbucks, Target, Uno's, Walmart and many more...

Orders will be placed as follows (use order form, or place online at www.shopwithscrip.com which includes list of over 300 retailers available):

Place Your Order By Receive Your Cards By

Sunday Dec 1st Sunday Dec 8th

Sunday Dec 8th Sunday Dec 15th

a large selection of cards will be available at the Holly Fair on 12/14

Thank you,
The Shopping Card Ministry Team

Daily Lectionary Scripture References
December 2019 (Year A)

Sun., Dec. 1

First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 122
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:36-44

Mon., Dec. 2

Psalm 124
Genesis 8:1-19 Romans 6:1-11

Tues., Dec. 3

Psalm 124 Genesis 9:1-17
Hebrews 11:32-40

Wed., Dec. 4

Psalm 124
Isaiah 54:1-10 Matthew 24:23-35

Thurs., Dec. 5 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Isaiah 4:2-6
Acts 1:12-17, 21-26

Fri., Dec. 6

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Isaiah 30:19-26
Acts 13:16-25

Sat., Dec. 7

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 Isaiah 40:1-11
John 1:19-28

Sun., Dec. 8

Second Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

Mon., Dec. 9

Psalm 21
Isaiah 24:1-16a
1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Tues., Dec. 10

Psalm 21
Isaiah 41:14-20
Romans 15:14-21

Wed., Dec. 11

Psalm 21
Genesis 15:1-18
Matthew 12:33-37

Thurs., Dec. 12

Psalm 146:5-10
Ruth 1:6-18
2 Peter 3:1-10

Fri., Dec. 13 Psalm 146:5-10

Ruth 4:13-17
2 Peter 3:11-18

Sat., Dec. 14 Psalm 146:5-10

Sat., Dec. 14 Psalm

146:5-10
1 Samuel 2:1-8
Luke 3:1-18

Sun., Dec. 15

Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke
1:46b-55
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Mon., Dec. 16

Psalm 42 Isaiah 29:17-24
Acts 5:12-16

Tues., Dec. 17 Psalm 42

Ezekiel 47:1-12 Jude 17-25

Wed., Dec. 18

Psalm 42
Zechariah 8:1-17
Matthew 8:14-17, 28-34

Thurs., Dec. 19 Psalm

80:1-7, 17-19 2 Samuel
7:1-17 Galatians 3:23-29

Fri., Dec. 20

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
2 Samuel 7:18-22
Galatians 4:1-7

Sat., Dec. 21 Psalm 80:1

-7, 17-19
2 Samuel 7:23-29
John 3:31-36

Sun., Dec. 22

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Mon., Dec. 23

Luke 1:46b-55
2 Samuel 7:18, 23-29
Galatians 3:6-14

Tues., Dec. 24

Christmas Eve
Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

Wed., Dec. 25

Christmas Day
Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]
John 1:1-14

Thurs., Dec. 26

Psalm 148
Wisdom 4:7-15 Acts 7:59-8:8

Fri., Dec. 27

Psalm 148
Proverbs 8:22-31
1 John 5:1-12

Sat., Dec. 28

Psalm 148
Isaiah 49:13-23
Matthew 18:1-14

Sun., Dec. 29

First Sunday after Christmas
Isaiah 63:7-9 Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

Mon., Dec. 30

Psalm 20
Isaiah 26:1-9 2
Corinthians 4:16-18

**Mon., Dec. 31 New Year's
Eve**

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a
Matthew 25:31-46

Dec 2019 (Eastern Time - New York)

Wilbraham United Church

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
10:30am - Yoga with 2pm - AED - FH 7pm - WUP-FH	5pm - Girl Scouts- 7pm - Tuesday 7pm - WUP-FH	3pm - Holly Fair 3:30pm - Girl Scouts 4:15pm - Girl Scouts 6pm - AIAnon @ YR 6:30pm - Cub Scout- 7pm - Band 7pm - Technology	6:30pm - AI Anon- 7pm - Bell Choir 7:45pm - Adult Choir	9:30am - Thrift Shop	9:30am - Thrift Shop 10am - Junior Choir	10am - Worship 6pm - AI Anon @ YR 6pm - Drumming
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10am - AED Training 10:30am - Yoga with 7pm - Phys Ops-ZR 7:30pm - WUP-FH	7pm - Governing	3:30pm - Girl Scouts 4:15pm - Girl Scouts 6pm - AIAnon @ YR 6:30pm - Cub Scout- 7pm - Band	6:30pm - AI Anon- 7pm - Bell Choir 7:45pm - Adult Choir	9:30am - Thrift Shop 10am - Springfield	9am - Holly Fair 9:30am - Thrift Shop 10am - Junior Choir	10am - Worship 12pm - Church with 6pm - AI Anon @ YR 6pm - Drumming
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
10:30am - Yoga with 7pm - Finance		3:30pm - Girl Scouts 4:15pm - Girl Scouts 6pm - AIAnon @ YR 6:30pm - Cub Scout 7pm - Band	11am - Loaves and 6:30pm - AI Anon- 7pm - Bell Choir 7:45pm - Adult Choir	9:30am - Thrift Shop	9:30am - Thrift Shop 10am - Junior Choir	10am - Worship 6pm - AI Anon @ YR 6pm - Drumming
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
10:30am - Yoga with		Church office closed 6pm - AIAnon @ YR	Church office closed 6:30pm - AI Anon- 7pm - Bell Choir 7:45pm - Adult Choir	Church office closed	10am - Junior Choir	10am - Worship 6pm - AI Anon @ YR 6pm - Drumming
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
10:30am - Yoga with						

Church Directory

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Wilbraham United Church Nursery School



Missed church?

Watch the service on Wilbraham Public Access, Channel 191,
8 PM on Mondays and 8 AM on Tuesdays.

Services are also available on-line.

Go to www.wilbraham-ma.gov

On the left click Public Access Schedules

- Channel 191.

Find the service you'd like to watch

by selecting a date on the calendar and a time, 8pm Mondays or 8am on Tuesdays.

Click Watch Now