



The Branchline

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

February 2024



"The value of life does not depend upon the place we occupy. It depends upon the way we occupy that place." Therese of Lisieux

Welcome to February!

This month heralds in the Lenten season, and it is very early this year. The wreath that I made for Christmas is still hanging on my wall at home. Yet Ash Wednesday is just two weeks away, on Valentine's Day, no less. I just can't seem to keep up with it all, because Lent is coming way too fast. Now it's time for ashes, hearts and roses, more snow. We might still be shoveling come Easter. But there is good news! God will help us with all of it, I'm sure.

Indeed, God will help us, for the season of Lent commemorates the forty days that Jesus spent in the Judean wilderness, alone, hungry, and tempted by the devil. Jesus spent this time preparing himself for his great task ahead, his public ministry and his crucifixion. We observe this season because of the great gift and sacrifice that God gave to us in Jesus.

If we open our hearts and minds we can discern how Jesus's time in the wilderness mirrors our own wilderness moments in life, when we to experience loneliness, weariness, scarcity of spirit, and our own encounters with the Tempter.

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From the Pastor's Desk (continued)

The parallels are evident and the message to us is that we need God to see us through. We can prepare ourselves to meet the wilderness occasions through our prayers, our works in the world and the up building of our relationship with God.

Sometimes, we need time to step back from life's detractions and reflect on what we are doing and what we are striving for in our relationship with God. The season of Lent is the perfect time to invest ourselves in spiritual disciplines and make positive changes within ourselves and with others.

Ash Wednesday also begins the Lenten journey of spiritual re-emergence. During this ancient ceremony which began in the 7th century, ashes were placed on the foreheads of the faithful as a sign of personal penitence. This began a time of waiting and preparation for the journey ahead. We have carried this observance into the 21st century and we too prepare for the days ahead with hope, determination and faithfulness.

No doubt the weather has been cold and relentless and it is easy to settle in and just wait for spring to bring warmer days and lighter moments. But, we might as well put this time to good use while we wait for that gust of rebirth to come and amaze us. God wants to hear from us, because he made us, because he saves us, because he loves us.

Lenten Blessings

Rev Janet



Greetings People of God,

Our congregation has begun gathering for conversations about our church and the work we need to accomplish for us to move on to our next chapter. We have the opportunity to reflect on where this church is moving towards and where it has come from. Also, to discuss this church's strengths and its growing edges. Our meetings are being held in Fellowship Hall during our coffee hour. The next meeting will be on February 25th. You are cordially invited to attend these gatherings as often as you are able. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or text 978-350-3463.

Blessings

Rev Janet



The Annual Financial Meeting of the Wilbraham United Church will be held February 18, 2024 in the Sanctuary immediately following Worship to transact the following business:

- Receive the Treasurer's Report

- Adopt a budget

Act on any other business properly brought before the Meeting

Nan Shepard, Clerk



All are invited to a Fat Tuesday celebration on Tuesday February 13th at 2PM. In the Zeckhausen Room. Rev. Janet will discuss the meaning of Mardi Gras and the beginning of Lent. Food items to celebrate the day will be served!





Hello! from the Music Room

How's the year going for us so far??? In about a week Lent begins, with Ash Wednesday as the marker leading into remembering those 40 days spent in the desert. For me – it seems like we just ended Advent. Guess I can ponder where all that time went. But really..... December, 2023 and the first weeks of 2024 have been something extraordinary with the jump from the birth story into the death and resurrection story. These are important days for us. Days that we can dig a little deeper – find something with a different flavor that can go on the front burner. We can't do like the mystics of old and the ancient philosophers and take time to ponder harder, although we might wonder about what all they had to do to make it from day to day.

It just comes down to the fact that times have always been busy – many people have had more work to do than what they thought they could ever accomplish. And the people of Wilbraham United are no exceptions to that rule of thumb. Life is busy here – our schedules are full. And most of the time, that works great for us. And every now and then, we need to take a deep breath – or three – and take a good look at all the ingredients that are in the mix. Isn't that what it's all about? Isn't our time worth spending to see and hear and sense the array of gifts used to bring about ... wonder ... beauty ... family ... community? I say YES it is!

Let's have some moments to ponder – and also work diligently to achieve our goalposts for ourselves and this church. Let 2024 bring on the rush and the crush, while we still take the time to savor what's on that front burner.

Happy Valentine's Day – didn't that end up in an interesting place on the calendar this year?!

Blessings and Peace, Bobbie

The Praise Band is in need of a guitarist. Rehearsals are flexible and we hope to play once a month for our church services. If you are interested or know of someone who is interested, please contact Patti Colkos at tricia30@charter.net



Family Bowling
night highlights



SUPER BOWL FOOD DRIVE

AFC

VS

NFC

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 11

Bring your non-perishable food items to church and vote for your favorite team to win!

All food items will be used to stock our Blessing Box or donated to the Community Survival Center!

CHILI & CORNBREAD TAKE-OUT SUPPER

Sunday Feb 11th

Pick-up between 4-5:30 PM

Pre-orders by February 9th

www.wilbrahamunitedplayers.org

8 oz chili and slice of cornbread \$10

16 oz chili and 2 slices cornbread \$15

32 oz and 4 slices of cornbread \$25

News from

CHURCH COUNCIL

Many hands make light work

...and we need many more hands!!!

Our Church Council has many current open positions and will have even more come June.

Without help, WUC will struggle to continue several missions and programs

Time commitments range from weekly tasks, to a few hours a month and even as needed.

For more info, please reach out to:

Rev. Janet and/or Kim Ryan

Wilbraham United Church presents our annual

Mother-Son Dance



Saturday, February 10, 2024

**Fellowship Hall at Wilbraham United Church
6:00pm-8:00pm**

\$20 per couple and \$5 each additional guest

All Sons and Moms (or those who are like a Mom to you) are welcome!

- Professional DJ
- Professional Photo Booth (Photo included)
- Refreshments

To purchase tickets, please scan the QR code here or visit www.wilbrahamunitedchurch.org. Tickets are limited, so please purchase early to avoid missing out!

Please email discipleship@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org with any questions



The March Branchline Deadline is February 26th. Please submit items of note to admin@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org

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Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ
Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

Daily Lectionary Scripture References – February 2024 (Year B)

Thurs., Feb. 1

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
Proverbs 12:10-21
Galatians 5:2-15

Fri., Feb. 2

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
Job 36:1-23
1 Corinthians 9:1-16

Sat., Feb. 3

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
Isaiah 46:1-13
Matthew 12:9-14

Sun., Feb. 4

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

Mon., Feb. 5

Psalm 102:12-28
2 Kings 4:8-17, 32-37
Acts 14:1-7

Tues., Feb. 6

Psalm 102:12-28
2 Kings 8:1-6
Acts 15:36-41

Wed., Feb. 7

Psalm 102:12-28
Job 6:1-13
Mark 3:7-12

Thurs., Feb. 8

Psalm 50:1-6
1 Kings 11:26-40
2 Corinthians 2:12-17

Fri., Feb. 9

Psalm 50:1-6
1 Kings 14:1-18
1 Timothy 1:12-20

Sat., Feb. 10

Psalm 50:1-6
1 Kings 16:1-7
Luke 19:41-44

Sun., Feb. 11

Transfiguration
2 Kings 2:1-12
Psalm 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Mark 9:2-9

Mon., Feb. 12

Psalm 110:1-4
Exodus 19:7-25
Hebrews 2:1-4

Tues., Feb. 13

Psalm 110:1-4
Job 19:23-27
1 Timothy 3:14-16

Wed., Feb. 14

Ash Wednesday
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Thurs., Feb. 15

Psalm 25:1-10
Daniel 9:1-14
1 John 1:3-10

Fri., Feb. 16

Psalm 25:1-10
Daniel 9:15-25a
2 Timothy 4:1-5

Sat., Feb. 17

Psalm 25:1-10
Psalm 32
Matthew 9:2-13

Sun., Feb. 18

First Sunday of Lent
Genesis 9:8-17
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:9-15

Mon., Feb. 19

Psalm 77
Job 4:1-21
Ephesians 2:1-10

Tues., Feb. 20

Psalm 77
Job 5:8-27
1 Peter 3:8-18a

Wed., Feb. 21

Psalm 77
Proverbs 30:1-9
Matthew 4:1-11

Thurs., Feb. 22

Psalm 22:23-31
Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18
Romans 3:21-31

Fri., Feb. 23

Psalm 22:23-31
Genesis 16:1-6
Romans 4:1-12

Sat., Feb. 24

Psalm 22:23-31
Genesis 16:7-15
Mark 8:27-30

Sun., Feb. 25

Second Sunday in Lent
Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
Psalm 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25
Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9

Mon., Feb. 26

Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45
Genesis 21:1-7
Hebrews 1:8-12

Tues., Feb. 27

Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45
Genesis 22:1-19
Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-19

Wed., Feb. 28

Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45
Jeremiah 30:12-22
John 12:36-43

Thurs., Feb. 29

Psalm 19
Exodus 19:1-9a
1 Peter 2:4-10

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
				6pm - Girl Scouts (Frias) 6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR) 7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc) 8pm - Chancel Choir (CR)		Private Event (Powell) 10am - Junior Choir (CR)
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship 11:30am - Interim Work 1pm - WUP (FH) 5pm - AL-Anon -YR	10am - PIECE MAKERS 6pm - Girl Scouts (Mutti) 7pm - WUP (FH)	2pm - Bible Study (ZR) 6:30pm - Girl Scout 7pm - WUP (FH)	11am - Staff Meeting 6:30pm - Boy Scouts 7pm - Phys Ops	6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR) 7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc) 8pm - Chancel Choir (CR)		Pinewood Derby Scouts 10am - Junior Choir (CR) 6pm - Mother Son Dance
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship 12:30pm - WUP Super 5pm - AL-Anon -YR	10am - PIECE MAKERS 6pm - WUP (FH)	11am - Woman's 2pm - Bible Study (ZR) 7pm - WUP (FH)	ASH WEDNESDAY 8:30am - Men's Breakfast 11am - Staff Meeting 6:30pm - Boy Scouts 7pm - Ash Wednesday	9:20am - Loaves and 6pm - Girl Scouts (Frias) 6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR) 7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc) 8pm - Chancel Choir (CR)		9am - WUP (FH) 10am - Junior Choir (CR)
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship 11:30am - Church Annual 12pm - Church Without 1pm - WUP (FH) 5pm - AL-Anon -YR	6:30am - Loaves and 6:30pm - Deacons (Lib) 7pm - Church Council 7pm - WUP (FH)	2pm - Bible Study (ZR) 7pm - WUP (FH)	11am - Staff Meeting 6:30pm - Boy Scouts 6:30pm - Discipleship 7pm - WUP (FH)	6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR) 7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc) 8pm - Chancel Choir (CR)		9am - WUP (FH) 10am - Junior Choir (CR)
25	26	27	28	29	1	2
10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship 1pm - WUP (FH) 5pm - AL-Anon -YR	10am - PIECE MAKERS 5:15pm - Girl Scouts 7pm - WUP (FH)	2pm - Bible Study (ZR) 7pm - WUP (FH)	8:30am - Men's Breakfast 11am - Staff Meeting 6:30pm - Boy Scouts 7pm - WUP (FH)	6pm - Girl Scouts (Frias) 6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR) 7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc) 8pm - Chancel Choir (CR)		