



# *The Branchline*

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

## *December 2024*

### *From the Pastor's Desk....*



*"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.....for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name."*

#### **The Gospel according to Luke**

Welcome to the month of December,

Every year when December comes around, I find that people are met with a myriad of emotions regarding the coming season. Those feelings range from pure excitement to an air of pure frenzy. The mix also includes a higher than normal stress level, and sometimes the well placed question of: "why do we do this to ourselves?" is asked. And as we draw nearer to the 'Big Event' time seems to speed up and the stress level exceeds our comfort level until we just can't wait for the season to be over.

Continued on page 2

From the Pastor's Desk (continued)

Ok, this is not good. We have to do better. If we pursue this course, we have missed the whole point of the season. We have missed the point of what it means to be a Christian. Oh, and by the way, we are given time to sort things out, it is called Advent. We need to use this time well.

The Advent season is a time of anticipation as well as preparation. We are anticipating the wonder of Christmas and we are preparing ourselves, preparing our hearts to receive God's greatest gift to the world. Moreover, the focus of the season is not just on Christ's birth, but also on the anticipation of Christ's return.

Let's not forget that Christmas is really a sacred festival day commemorating the coming of light returning to the world, the light being Jesus. And even in the midst of our human complexities; our struggles, our worries, our challenges in living, Jesus is the hope that the darkness will never prevail. So even when we feel anxious, overwhelmed...overdone, we have the knowledge of God's great love for the world, to fortify us and guide us through life's challenging seasons.

Why do we celebrate Christmas? We celebrate Christmas because we are Christian people and this is when we commemorate Christ's birth and all that has been done for us because of his coming. It should not be a fretful and worrisome and wear yourself out holiday. Our Christmas faith promises us so much more than that.

So as we move into December, let us all work together to embrace the true meaning of Christmas. Let it be the love and gift of Christ which takes us over, fills us up with hope, peace, love and joy. And let the magic of Christmas continue to amaze us and transform us all the year through.

Brightest Blessings

Rev Janet



*Save the date*



**Sign up for the Christmas Pageant -see sign up sheet in the Narthex**

**Rehearsal 11:40 a.m. -  
Sunday December 15th**

*It is requested that if you wish to take part in the pageant, that you commit to being there for rehearsal. Pageant is during worship December 22nd.*

**A CIRCLE OF SUPPORT  
IN CHALLENGING AND  
UNCERTAIN TIMES**

We are about to enter a new year, and there is considerable anxiety and uncertainty surrounding what this New Year will look like. Because of the concerns and fears which have been expressed by many, the Wilbraham United Church would like to offer a safe place where people can come and express their opinions, worries and differing experiences. We aim to listen with respect and compassion, and to be open to everyone's point of view.

Beginning on **November 26, 2024**, from 4:30-5:30, you are invited to come and share your concerns in a place that holds no judgement.

For more information, please contact the church office (413)596-2511 x100 or [admin@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org](mailto:admin@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org)

**All are welcome**



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

**Additional Meeting Dates December 3 & 17**

The January Branchline Deadline is January 2. Please submit items of note to [admin@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org](mailto:admin@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org)



IT'S NOT  
*Christmas*  
WITHOUT  
*Cookies*



Attention  
Cookie  
Bakers!

Once again we're looking for your most special cookies, bars and barks for our world famous cookie walk at this year's Holly Fair! Items can be dropped off to the church kitchen by the morning of Friday, 12/13. Not a baker yourself? Maybe you have a family member or friend who is and they might be willing to bake for us. This is always one of the most popular stops at the Holly Fair all because of your support! Reach out to Chrissy Plumb with any questions - [plumb1993@charter.net](mailto:plumb1993@charter.net).



HOLLY FAIR  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

**HELP WANTED!**

We are in need of volunteers to help make this fair a super success!

Volunteers are needed for:  
Decorating, Cookie Walk, Bakers, Raffle,  
Lug Nuts, Greeting, Furniture moving,  
Holly Cafe...

Contact Kim Ryan:  
[WUChurchEvents@gmail.com](mailto:WUChurchEvents@gmail.com)  
519-6335



**Wilbraham United Church Fellowship Hall 5pm to 7pm**

**Spaghetti Dinner**

**December 21st**

**Karaoke**

**Crafts**





## Hello! from the Music Room

Branchline - a great name for a monthly newsletter. Branches change from month to month in ways similar to our activities. Those of the deciduous trees are now bare of leaves showing the sure signs of winter's arrival. We're not quite there yet according to the calendar but it's coming quickly, as are Advent and Christmas events in the church schedule. It's time to prepare for concerts, pageants, seasonal worship experiences and opportunities.

The Music Program is gearing up for the season. Everyone is working to create sounds that will have meaning and presence for all of us gathered in the space. The December 1st worship service held the theme of being blessed. In her sermon, Rev. Janet spoke directly to the receiving and giving of blessings. Following her message (and the middle hymn) the Chancel Choir sang the anthem "Blessed Are They." It's more than a happy coincidence - the Spirit is moving around us as we come together to become a whole.

We enjoyed hearing the Praise Band a couple of weeks ago and look forward to more of those sounds as the winter progresses. The Junior Choir is prepping for the Pageant (December 22) and Family Service (4:00 on Christmas Eve). They have enormous energy!! Musical sounds are happening in the sanctuary and music room as the days go by.

Branches have a strangely symbolic structure as they bend and twist, making room for each other, helping each other with support and creating patterns that can fascinate our imaginations. They are a positive symbol for faith groups as we seek ways to build relationships in different areas of the community.

I am grateful to the Bell Choir for the time and effort they've given in the past weeks to take part in the December 1st concert. A true celebration of branches with different sizes and shapes, making sounds that weave in and out to make harmony and dissonance that flow toward a goal of unity in making music. Thank you to all of the support given by the congregation and community to bring this about. So kudos to the group who pinned the name "Branchline" to this monthly news offering. I always want to submit something profound - but generally it's the news of what we are up to in the Music Room. I feel profoundly blessed to be working with you as we explore more pathways.

Blessings, Bobbie

# HANDBELL CONCERT

December 1,  
2024





# Save Our Steeple!



The iconic steeple which sits high above Main Street is in need of costly repairs.

How to donate:



Cash



Check

[WilbrahamUnitedChurch.org](http://WilbrahamUnitedChurch.org)

From all of us at Wilbraham United Church, we thank you for your generosity!

## STEEPLE UPDATE

Collected to date \$47269

Total Amount Paid to Repair Steeple \$48269

Balance to Raise \$1000!!!

We currently have an expanded inventory of Shopping Cards. As always, we have Big Y and Stop and Shop in stock. The following brands are also currently in stock for the holiday season:

99's Restaurant  
Amazon  
Apple  
Darden (Olive Garden, Longhorn)  
Dominos  
Dunkin  
Gap/Old Navy  
Home Depot  
Land's End  
LL Bean  
Lowe's  
Starbucks  
Subway  
Target  
TJ Max/Marshalls/Home Goods  
Unos

### SHOPPING CARD SPECIAL ORDER DATE

**December 15**

Card orders for the  
Holidays ordered by the  
date above will usually  
be available by the  
following Sunday

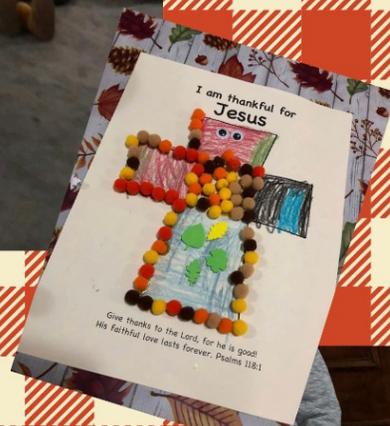
*See our extended inventory for the holidays!*

**See us at the Holly Fair!!**



# Charlie Brown Thanksgiving

November 23





# CHRISTMAS AT WILBRAHAM UNITED CHURCH

Sunday December 22

10:00 a.m. - Christmas Pageant with live  
Nativity

Tuesday December 24

4:00 p.m. - Family Christmas Eve Service  
7:00 p.m. - Service of Lessons and Carols

All are welcome!

500 Main St

Wilbraham, MA 01095

(413)596-2511

[wilbrahamunitedchurch.org](http://wilbrahamunitedchurch.org)





Wilbraham United Church has been providing meals to Loaves and Fishes longer than I have been a member of this church. Edna and I have been concerned that if something happened to any of the members of the group that prepare or deliver the meals, there may be a lapse in supplying the meals. So, just in case of vacations or sickness, Edna and I would like a few people to learn our jobs and the process to ensure continuation of this wonderful Outreach program.

Once, every other month (Nov, Jan, March, May, July, Sept) we cook and assemble the meals on the third Tuesday of the month that we deliver the meals to L&F. We make the casseroles for two months at a time. One month's (6 casseroles) goes in the freezer) and the other 6 casseroles are delivered to Springfield on Thursday. Edna does the cooking and I (Sandy) do the shopping. I shop a few days before at Restaurant Depot. Two people have already volunteered to learn the shopping end. We need some volunteers to learn the cooking part so we have some backup for Edna. We need one or two people to work with Edna for a couple of cooking sessions to learn that part.

If you can help, please contact Sandy Harris – (413) 599-0176 or [sandyEPH@charter.net](mailto:sandyEPH@charter.net). Let's ensure that



## **DANGEROUS TREE**

The Ash Tree, with three trunks, to the street side of Fellowship Hall is nearly dead and has become a safety issue as it is intermittently dropping branches of various sizes. It needs to be removed before anyone is injured. The current church budget cannot fund this project. There is a quote for removal in the amount of \$1900 which is \$1100 lower than a previous quote. We need donations in any amount to help cover this cost. A couple of members have stepped forward with a starter donation. If you can make a donation, please send it to the church office indicating for tree project. Tentative tree removal is scheduled for the first part of January.





# Southern New England Conference

United Church of Christ

*Living the Love & Justice of Jesus*

## Daily Lectionary Scripture References – December 2024 (Year C)

### **Sun., Dec. 1**

*First Sunday of Advent*  
Jeremiah 33:14-16  
Psalm 25:1-10  
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13  
Luke 21:25-36

### **Mon., Dec. 2**

Psalm 90  
Numbers 17:1-11  
2 Peter 3:1-18

### **Tues., Dec. 3**

Psalm 90  
2 Samuel 7:18-29  
Revelation 22:12-16

### **Wed., Dec. 4**

Psalm 90  
Isaiah 1:24-31  
Luke 11:29-32

### **Thurs., Dec. 5**

Luke 1:68-79  
Malachi 3:5-12  
Philippians 1:12-18a

### **Fri., Dec. 6**

Luke 1:68-79  
Malachi 3:13-18  
Philippians 1:18b-26

### **Sat., Dec. 7**

Luke 1:68-79  
Malachi 4:1-6  
Luke 9:1-6

### **Sun., Dec. 8**

*Second Sunday of Advent*  
Baruch 5:1-9  
or Malachi 3:1-4  
Luke 1:68-79  
Philippians 1:3-11  
Luke 3:1-6

### **Mon., Dec. 9**

Psalm 126  
Isaiah 40:1-11  
Romans 8:22-25

### **Tues., Dec. 10**

Psalm 126  
Isaiah 19:18-25  
2 Peter 1:2-15

### **Wed., Dec. 11**

Psalm 126  
Isaiah 35:3-7  
Luke 7:18-30

### **Thurs., Dec. 12**

Isaiah 12:2-6  
Amos 6:1-8  
2 Corinthians 8:1-15

### **Fri., Dec. 13**

Isaiah 12:2-6  
Amos 8:4-12  
2 Corinthians 9:1-15

### **Sat., Dec. 14**

Isaiah 12:2-6  
Amos 9:8-15  
Luke 1:57-66

### **Sun., Dec. 15**

*Third Sunday of Advent*  
Zephaniah 3:14-20  
Isaiah 12:2-6  
Philippians 4:4-7  
Luke 3:7-18

### **Mon., Dec. 16**

Isaiah 11:1-9  
Numbers 16:1-19  
Hebrews 13:7-17

### **Tues., Dec. 17**

Isaiah 11:1-9  
Numbers 16:20-35  
Acts 28:23-31

### **Wed., Dec. 18**

Isaiah 11:1-9  
Micah 4:8-13  
Luke 7:31-35

### **Thurs., Dec. 19**

Psalm 80:1-7  
Jeremiah 31:31-34  
Hebrews 10:10-18

### **Fri., Dec. 20**

Psalm 80:1-7  
Isaiah 42:10-18  
Hebrews 10:32-39

### **Sat., Dec. 21**

Psalm 80:1-7  
Isaiah 66:7-11  
Luke 13:31-35

### **Sun., Dec. 22**

*Fourth Sunday of Advent*  
Micah 5:2-5a  
Luke 1:46b-55  
or Psalm 80:1-7  
Hebrews 10:5-10  
Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

### **Mon., Dec. 23**

Psalm 113  
Genesis 25:19-28  
Colossians 1:15-20

### **Tues., Dec. 24**

*Christmas Eve*  
Isaiah 62:6-12  
Psalm 97  
Titus 3:4-7  
Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20

### **Wed., Dec. 25**

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

### **Thurs., Dec. 26**

Psalm 148  
2 Chronicles 24:17-24  
Acts 6:1-7; 7:51-60

### **Fri., Dec. 27**

Psalm 148  
Proverbs 8:32-36  
John 21:19b-24

### **Sat., Dec. 28**

Psalm 148  
Isaiah 54:1-13  
Revelation 21:1-7

### **Sun., Dec. 29**

*First Sunday after Christmas*  
1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26  
Psalm 148  
Colossians 3:12-17  
Luke 2:41-52

### **Mon., Dec. 30**

Psalm 147:12-20  
2 Chronicles 1:7-13  
Mark 13:32-37

### **Tues., Dec. 31**

*New Year's Eve*  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13  
Psalm 8  
Revelation 21:1-6a  
Matthew 25:31-46

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship 11:15am - Junior Choir 3pm - WUC Handbell 5pm - AI- Anon -YR	2 10am - Piece Makers	3 2pm - Bible Study (ZR) 4:30pm - Circle of	4 11am - Staff Meeting 6pm - Boy Scouts (TS, 6:30pm - Phys Ops 7pm - Praise Band (Sanc)	5 <b>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</b> 6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR) 7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc) 8pm - Chancel Choir	6 10am - Knit Stitch Play	7
8 10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship 11:15am - Junior Choir 11:45am - Pageant 5pm - AI- Anon -YR	9 11am - Funeral Jane 7pm - WUP (FH)	10 8:30am - Men's Breakfast 2pm - Bible Study (ZR)	11 <b>HOLLY FAIR SET UP - FH</b> 11am - Staff Meeting 6pm - Boy Scouts (TS, 7pm - Praise Band (Sanc)	12 <b>HOLLY FAIR SET UP - FH</b> 6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR) 7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc) 8pm - Chancel Choir	13 <b>HOLLY FAIR SET UP - FH</b>	14 <b>HOLLY FAIR</b>
15 10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship 11:15am - Junior Choir 11:45am - Pageant 5pm - AI- Anon -YR	16 10am - Piece Makers 6:30pm - Trustees (ZR) 7pm - Church Council	17 11am - Woman's 2pm - Bible Study (ZR) 4:30pm - Circle of	18 11am - Staff Meeting 1pm - Set up for 6pm - Boy Scouts (TS, 7pm - Praise Band (Sanc)	19 <b>Preschool Christmas</b> 9:20am - Loaves and 6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR) 7pm - Bell Choir (Sanc) 8pm - Chancel Choir	20 <b>Preschool Christmas</b>	21 5pm - Christmas Craft
22 10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship 11:15am - Junior Choir 5pm - AI- Anon -YR 5pm - Confirmation Class	23	24 8:30am - Men's Breakfast 11am - Wedding meeting	25 <b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>	26 <b>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</b> 6:30pm - AL-Anon (YR)	27	28
29 10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship 11:15am - Junior Choir 5pm - AI- Anon -YR	30 <b>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</b>	31	1	2	3	4