

SALEM UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHAPEL CHIMES NEWSLETTER

"Sharing faith, lifting up, reaching out and growing together."

DECEMBER 2020

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Lectionary Readings

Sunday, December 6, 2020
Second Sunday of Advent

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
Epistle: 2 Peter 3:8-15a
Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

Sunday, December 13, 2020
Third Sunday of Advent

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm: Psalm 126
Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sunday, December 20, 2020
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Hebrew Scripture: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Psalm: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Epistle: Romans 16:25-27
Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

Thursday, December 24, 2020
The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Eve)

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm: Psalm 96
Epistle: Titus 2:11-14
Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

Friday, December 25, 2020
The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Day)

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm: Psalm 98
Epistle: Hebrews 1:1-4
Gospel: John 1:1-14

Sunday, December 27, 2020
First Sunday after Christmas

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Psalm: Psalm 148
Epistle: Galatians 4:4-7
Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

FIRST NOTES

We come to the last month of 2020. Along with many of you, I hope that we will not see a year like it again. At this writing, the coronavirus is still running like wildfire in our part of the country. Illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths have hit close to home. Virus-related business downturns have impacted many families. If that were not enough, our nation is just starting to move through the outcome of a bitter-contested election season.

Yet, as bleak as things have been on so many fronts, we, as Christians, look to the future in hope. December will find us in the season of Advent, which is a season that emphasizes hope. Christians look to the completion of God's Governance (the Kingdom of God), which will be marked with peace, justice, healing, and wholeness. We currently live in that tension between what is and what will be, and we long for the fulfillment of that promise.

In the meantime, we are not alone. God has not forgotten us or forsaken us.

One of the things that we will do to remember the disappointments of this year and our anticipation of the hope that is to come, is to hold an on-line "Longest Night" service on Monday, December 21st, at 7:00 p.m. We will lift up both our losses and our hopes at this time and we will seek God's healing.

Realistically, I do not anticipate that we will have in-person worship during the season of Advent. Marsha Meyer has put together resources for households to celebrate the season at home, and I hope that many of you have taken advantage of that opportunity. As of this writing, we have not finalized what our worship on Christmas Eve will look like, but I encourage you to be on the lookout for the details when they come in the days ahead.

In the meantime, Advent encourages us to hope. The darkest, longest nights will eventually give way to light and hope. This current darkness will not last forever.

Until next month.

Shalom aleichem—Peace be with you.

Rev. Jim Hoppert