

SALEM UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHAPEL CHIMES NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2019



FRONT NOTES

With the early arrival of the cold and snow in November, it's not been a difficult thing to get into an Advent/Christmas frame of mind as I write this month's front page. It's a not-so-gentle reminder that those events will get here sooner than we know.

The First Sunday of Advent falls on December 1st and that weekend will mark the beginning of a worship series that will run through the entire month of December, "Heaven and Nature Sing." This year marks the 300th anniversary of the hymn, "Joy to the World," which is poet Isaac Watt's famous interpretation of Psalm 98, sung often during this season. Our focus during this series will be on "joy," which is not simply another word for "happiness," but is something much deeper than that. Our series will remind us that "joy" can also be found in the midst of suffering, doing the work of justice, and in the presence of compassion. This is the message that Jesus shared with us when he proclaimed the Good News of God's Reign and it is a message that our world very much needs to hear today. Even in the midst of uncertainty, struggle, and deep divisions within our society, God's joy is still present to us, and it is important for us to keep lighting candles in the darkness and abiding in joy.

In keeping with that theme of joy, Salem will be hosting the four-choir (St. Peter's UCC, Kiel, Bethlehem UCC, Kiel, First Congregational, Plymouth, and Salem) Christmas concert, "Sing Joy," on Sunday, December 8th at 4:00 p.m. When the four choirs got together to perform last year in Kiel, it was a memorable experience for all who were in attendance, and this year's program promises to be just as meaningful. Make a point of circling the date and get there early for good seating.

The following week, our all-church Christmas program will be held on Sunday, December 15th at 9:00 a.m., featuring the participation of our church school children and the special music of our congregation. It will be an excellent opportunity for multiple generations of our congregation to get together to worship and celebrate in this season.

The list of Christmas services and other special activities for the month of December will be listed further on in the Chapel Chimes, so I encourage you to note these. There will be plenty of activity going on during the month.

And here's one last thought to share with you: it is my sincere hope that the month ahead will be more than just a whirl of frenzied activity. I hope that you will find opportunities to discover hope, peace, joy, and love, as well, that the days will be full of meaning.

Your servant in Christ,

Rev. Jim Hoppert

DECEMBER LECTIONARY READINGS

Sunday, December 1, 2019
First Sunday of Advent

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm: Psalm 122
Epistle: Romans 13:11-14
Gospel: Matthew 24:36-44

Sunday, December 8, 2019
Second Sunday of Advent

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Epistle: Romans 15:4-13
Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday, December 15, 2019
Third Sunday of Advent

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm: Psalm 146:5-10
Epistle: James 5:7-10
Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

Sunday, December 22, 2019
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Epistle: Romans 1:1-7
Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

Tuesday, December 24, 2019
The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Eve)

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

Wednesday, December 25, 2019
The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Day)

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

Sunday, December 29, 2019
First Sunday after Christmas

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm: Psalm 148
Epistle: Hebrews 2:10-18
Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST