



A publication of the East Woodstock Congregational Church, 220 Woodstock Road, East Woodstock, CT 06244  
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**The Trumpet deadline is the 20<sup>th</sup> of every month!**



**“The irrational season”**

*This is the irrational season*

*When love blooms bright and wild.*

*Had Mary been filled with reason*

*There'd have been no room for the child.*

*~ Madeleine L'Engle*

Advent is a wonderfully irrational season. It makes no sense that the Creator of the Universe would be willing to be as vulnerable as a baby. It is not rational to think that the mysterious Author of Life would place signs and wonders – a star! – in the heavens, pointing the way to anyone who was willing to look up, to watch, and to wonder. And it is not reasonable to expect that God Almighty would be born in a stable, surrounded by animals, and watched over tenderly by his young parents.

And yet that is the joy and wonder of Advent. It is that season when we celebrate that God is willing to surprise us and to come into our lives in unexpected ways.

- Just when Israel had reached its lowest level of despair, hope was given.
- Just when the darkness threatened to overcome the nation and everyone in it, light arrived.
- Just when Mary thought that she would be

an ordinary girl living an unremarkable life, an angel appeared.

This is what we celebrate in the season of Advent – that God surprises us, that we cannot “figure out” God because God acts in ways that may seem irrational to our human understanding. The Good News of Advent is that God chooses to enter into our lives and break through our complacent routines. Surprise! God the irrational announces that – despite all the evidence to the contrary – there is reason to hope.

That hope comes right from the angel's lips: Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy. Unto you is born this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Advent tells us:

- We are not alone
- God is Emmanuel, always with us.

It may not make sense that God would choose to come to us. It may not seem rational that the Almighty would shower love and forgiveness and new life on us, but that is what God does – today and every day.

Celebrate the irrational!

Celebrate the mercy of God!

Advent blessings to you,

Rev. Dr. Susan J. Foster

**The following are the scriptures for the month of December:**

You are invited to read them as part of your daily devotions and as preparation for worship.

**December 3**

Isaiah 64:1-9  
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
1 Corinthians 1:3-9  
Mark 13:24-37

**December 17**

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11  
Psalm 126  
Luke 1:46b-55  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24  
John 1:6-8, 19-28

**December 10**

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

**December 24**

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16  
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26  
Luke 1:46b-55  
Romans 16:25-27  
Luke 1:26-38

**December 31**

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

## Worship News

*Join us for worship every Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. Can't attend in person? Join us live on Facebook or our YouTube channel. (Recordings of the service can also be found there).*

**December 3:** First Sunday of Advent, Communion Sunday

**December 10:** Second Sunday of Advent

**December 17:** Third Sunday of Advent; Christmas Pageant

**December 21 (Thursday):** Quiet Christmas Service, 7:00 pm

**December 24:** Fourth Sunday of Advent; Christmas Eve Services  
5:00 pm: Carols and Christmas Story. Bell choir ringing. 11:00 pm: Candlelight communion. Special music.

**December 31:** 10:00 am Worship



Study <sup>the</sup> Bible  
with us



*A mid-week  
opportunity for  
conversation, coffee,  
learning, and  
laughter.*

Give yourself the gift  
of time...

**Wednesday  
morning study  
group  
10:00 a.m.**

**Everyone is  
welcome!**

**LBS News**

(Ladies Benevolent Society)

LBS met on November 15 with 14 women in attendance. We reviewed the preliminary results for our Holly Fair of \$9,817 which does not include all expenses. We voted to give \$3,000 of this to the EWCC General Fund and to use some of the funds to:

1. Purchase a new upright freezer to replace the old one.
2. Purchase kitchen utensils for cooking; some commercial baking sheets; and a couple of frying pans.
3. Purchase seasonal 8-foot long tablecloths – 4 of each.
4. Fund the breakfast for our Annual Meeting

We have set aside funds for commitments as follows:

1. Painting of sanctuary \$5,000
2. Refurbishment of sanctuary and narthex \$7,000

We reviewed needed changes/improvements for next year's Holly Fair. We need giftable items and Christmas decorations since we had very little left after our sale! As you go through your decorations this month, please give us the things that you are no longer using! We also need to provide lunch for our volunteers!

Our next meeting is on December 13 and will be hosted by Susan Converse and Pam Brown. All are welcome to join in the festivities. Please consider bringing a gift card to local supermarkets or gas stations. These will be given to Pastor Sue for distribution as needed during the coming year.

Our programs for the remainder of the year are posted on a bulletin board in Fellowship Hall and here is a quick summary:

- |               |                 |                         |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| ❖ December 13 | Christmas Party | ALL are welcome         |
| ❖ March 20    | Roseland Park   | Pam Brown               |
| ❖ April 17    | Alaska          | Christine & Glen Lessig |
| ❖ May 15      | Visionary Women | Ellen Duzak             |
|               |                 | ○ Celebrating Gardening |

Please come and join us at our next meeting on December 13 at 1:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Enjoy our program, refreshments, and fellowship. ALL ARE WELCOME!

Kerstin Forrester

**Save the Date for our annual  
Women's Retreat  
at Camp Wightman!!**

**Friday – Saturday  
March 22-23, 2024**



**HOLLY FAIR THANK YOU!!!**

A huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who helped ensure another successful Holly Fair. Our preliminary profit is \$9,817 with a few more expenses to be deducted!

Thank you to **Donna Baldyga** who chaired this event and got us started in September! She put in many hours to ensure that everything fell into place. Also thank you to the following booth chairs:

**Buckeyes and Candy****Crafts****New & Like New****Jewelry****Baked Goods****Baskets****Soup****Coffee, tea, hot chocolate**

Diane Morin, Angela Young, Erica Hermonot, Ashley Rebello

Amy Hiller-White, Diane Billings, Barbara Hackett

Cris Waldron, Lynn Hescheles, Judith Wong

Marilyn Rath, Carrie Walker

Taryn Tomkins, Marian Hallowell, Brenda Tremblay

Kerstin Forrester, Karin Tourtellotte, Dianna Rebello

Kerstin Forrester, Nancy Gale

Faith Armstrong

We also had a lot of volunteers, especially *our youth* who came to carry, move, and store items. It truly takes a village to make this event successful year after year.

**THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!!**

Sincerely,

Kerstin Forrester, President, LBS

## THANK YOU!!!

*Our church is blessed by the work of many volunteers. Every bit of effort and caring helps our church live out its calling to be the Body of Christ. This month we especially would like to thank...*

**Donna Baldyga, Kerstin Forrester**, and everyone who helped make the Holly Fair be such a success! It was a festive day of fellowship and fun as we welcomed hundreds of people in to enjoy all the crafts, baked goods, homemade treats, and wonderful baskets.

**Judith Wong** for organizing all of our volunteers on Jeans Sunday. Many thanks to EVERYONE who raked, polished, cleaned, and tidied on this day of fellowship and camaraderie – our church home is sparkling because of your efforts!

**Seth Spalding** for his diligence in checking all of the safety equipment around our church. Seth tests the emergency lights, fire extinguishers, and alarms to be sure they are ready when needed. Thank you for helping us keep safe!

**Dawn Adiletta, Mark Billings, Jen Griffin, Emily Hayden, Bob Rath, Anne Sorensen**, and **Windsor White** for participating in our “confirmation conversations” every Sunday in November. It was a delight to have intergenerational discussion on a variety of topics!

## Jeans Sunday Thank You!

Many thanks to our enthusiastic group of volunteers who made our annual Jeans Sunday a grand success! Our clean-up day after worship on Sunday, November 12th had many helpers cleaning windows and gutters, changing light bulbs, raking leaves, polishing, disinfecting, organizing, and completing many more tasks that REALLY make a difference in the upkeep of our church buildings and grounds. Society's special thanks go out to Kerstin Forrester who hosted our much-appreciated volunteer lunch after the clean-up, and to everyone who rolled up their sleeves and offered their time and energy to make our Church really shine! Through your good work we were all filled with a wonderful sense of fellowship and pride knowing that we ALL played an important role in caring for our beloved church.

Thank you one and all!

Judith Wong, on behalf of Society

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### *Let's remember our friends who can't join us on Sundays.*

If you have a moment, send someone a card – it means so much to be remembered. (If you know of others, please contact the church office)

**Grace Arsenault**

Cape Cod Senior Residence  
100 Dr. Julius Kelley Lane  
Pocasset, MA 02559

**Dottie Carlyle**

PO Box 245  
East Woodstock, CT 06244

**Ken Marvin****Bill Cruttenden**

Westview Healthcare Center  
150 Ware Road  
Dayville, CT 06241

**Ellie Smith**

Greenville Center  
735 Putnam Pike  
Greenville, RI 02828

**Jasmin Floyd**

PO Box 597  
N. Grosvenordale, CT 06255

**Allie Compagnone**

1768 Gale Street  
Englewood, FL 34223

**Janet Hansen**

Brookdale at Eddy Pond West  
669 Washington Street #307  
Auburn, MA 01501

**Sally May**

PO Box 67  
East Woodstock, CT 06244

**Jerry Moschella**

165 Corbin Road  
Dudley, MA 01571



## **Poinsettias in the Sanctuary**

Would you like to have a poinsettia in the sanctuary for Christmas?

Please fill out this form and **return as soon as possible.**

**Deadline is December 10<sup>th</sup>.**

Make your checks payable to EWCC and mail to PO Box 156, East Woodstock, CT 06244,  
or leave it in the church office.

One size is available - \$17.00 ea.

How many? \_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_\_

To Honor \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to give your plant to a shut in?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_



### **Refurbishment Committee Update**

Our Refurbishment Committee has been working hard as we continue to explore ways to address the needs of current and future congregations while celebrating the legacy and personality of our beloved Church.

You may have noticed that the existing sconces on the balconies were taken down for refurbishment. They are being re-wired and repainted and will be placed back in position for Advent with a new dimmable switch and new frosted LED bulbs. Our refurbished lights are a good fit with the aesthetics of our Sanctuary and will offer more light with less wattage.

In addition, with recent failures to our antiquated soundboard that controls the audio for both our in-person and online worship services, it's time to update our audio equipment to accommodate our expanding needs. We hope to replace our existing soundboard and related audio accessories in the near future so that we can be confident in offering quality live and online audio streaming.

Look for more updates as we continue to work with contractors and specialists who have been helping us evaluate our current Sanctuary and Narthex infrastructure, offering guidance for possible layout modifications to provide more worship flexibility, and providing estimates for cosmetic and refurbishment opportunities.

We couldn't begin to do any of these upgrades without your interest and involvement. On behalf of our Refurbishment Committee, we encourage your ongoing support and input, and look forward to continuing to partner with you, strengthen our faith, and make our Church welcoming for all.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judith Wong  
Chair, Refurbishment Committee

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### **Call to Special Meeting**

Sunday, December 11, 2022  
Immediately following Worship

At the request of the following members of this church: Glen Lessig, DeEtta Spalding, Judith Wong, Jeff Wong, Kerstin Forrester, Charlotte Davis, John Davis and Amy Hiller-White, and under the provisions of Article VI, Section 11 of our By-Laws, I am calling a special meeting of the members of the church on Sunday, December 11, 2022, immediately following the worship service.

The purpose of the meeting is to approve the expenditure of up to \$13,200.00 to upgrade the church audio system.

The Sanctuary Refurbishment Committee, a sub-committee of Society, is recommending this action so that orders for the equipment can be placed as soon as possible given the long lead times for receipt of such equipment.

Christine Armstrong, Clerk



### Loss during the holidays

Losing a loved one is always difficult. The holidays can make that loss even more painful. This poem expresses the care we want to share with those who are mourning.

#### *Sorry for Your Loss*

When I say *sorry for your loss*  
it may sound perfunctory  
trite even

but what I mean is

I am sorry  
that you wake in the night  
gasping for breath  
heart racing in agony.

I am sorry  
that you will know a lifetime  
of *what ifs* and  
*could have beens*.

I am sorry  
that you ache  
for one more minute with your love  
knowing it can never be.

When I say *sorry for your loss*  
please know  
my soul is reaching out to yours  
in understanding  
and trying very hard  
to take away  
just one little ounce of your pain.

~Donna Ashworth

**Advent Reflection: *Christmas Child*** by Rev. Emily Heath

If you really love this child in the manger at Christmas, then you have to love every other child in this world on every other day. In fact, you cannot love this child in the manger if you do not love the others too.

And so, if you love the baby who was born with nothing in a barn, then you have to love the children who are born into poverty today.

If you love the child who had to flee with his parents to a new land, then you have to love the children who are alone without their parents at the border tonight.

If you love the child who would become the Prince of Peace, then you have to love the children who are scared about violence at their schools.

If you love the child who would grow to say that the meek, and that includes children, shall inherit the earth, then you have to care about the world that we will leave for our children.

God's love has come to us as a child. This Christmas, may our love for that child compel us to love children everywhere.



## Save the Date!



Flying Free Therapeutic Riding Center is a 501(c)(3) that supports children and adults with special needs through horses. It was founded just over a year ago. This deserving nonprofit needs our support. Our wonderful church has offered a potluck fundraiser opportunity for Flying Free on **Saturday, December 9 at 5 PM** in Fellowship Hall. There will be live music, raffles, and lots of delicious food. \$25 donation per person, prior to or at the event. Checks can be made out to Flying Free TRC, Inc. Please come and support this wonderful nonprofit in need!

## *Please join us for Christmas Eve Services*

*5:00 pm: Features the Christmas story and songs; children are especially welcome!*

*11:00 pm: Candlelight Communion.*

*Please join us for one or both!*



## Outreach Committee News



### *The Giving Tree* *Bring joy during the holidays by giving...*

Look for the 'The Giving Tree' table in Fellowship Hall after service on **Dec 3**. You need to **sign up** when taking a tag.

Providing gifts to:

- Covenant-to-Care  
(DCF Social Workers provide to children in Foster Care in our local NE CT)
- Local Shelters in NE CT
- Local individuals and families

**Please bring gifts unwrapped in a gift bag by Sunday, December 17.**

Your participation in our Christmas Gift Drive is an opportunity for you to personally, and positively influence the lives of people in challenging situations in our community. Thank you! For more information, please contact Pam Brown [pbbrown208@charter.net](mailto:pbbrown208@charter.net)



### *CWS - Church World Services* *Blankets/Cards \$10*

*Purchase a blanket and honor a loved one with a card to acknowledge that a compassionate gift has been given in their honor in support of CWS.*

Cards will be available Dec 3 & 10 after church service

Church World Service distributes blankets around the world. These blankets provide warmth and comfort and reach families fleeing their homes, and recovering from disasters, and more.

**Community Kitchen:** EWCC prepared 84 meals on Monday, Nov. 6, thanks to Kerstin Forrester, Barbara Hackett, and the crew! For December they will be preparing cheeseburger casserole with the 15 pounds of hamburger donated by Angela Young, Woodstock Creamery to Community Kitchen. **Thank you, Angela, for your generosity!**



### **First Friday Food Fair - Food Distribution Site**

For anyone who could benefit from additional food support.

**Friday, Dec. 1      9 am to 10 am**

We continue to appreciate and collect non-perishable food items. Collection bins are on the ramp to Fellowship Hall or the Outreach table.

**Thank you!**

### **DVS - Domestic Violence Shelter**

We are collecting new or gently used towels.



**WAIM - Windham Area Interfaith Ministry** - Mission: *Uplifting and uniting our community by providing caring services and resources to meet our neighbors' needs with dignity and respect.* **Thank you to the Confirmation Class of 6 teens who volunteered at the workday on Saturday, Oct. 28.** They were an impressive working crew who had fun while they worked. Great spirit!

## **Book Discussion Group**

There will be no book discussion in December.

**January 29<sup>th</sup> selection is The Light Keeper's Daughter by Hazel Gaynor**

*"They call me a heroine, but I am not deserving of such accolades. I am just an ordinary young woman who did her duty."*



1838: Northumberland, England. Longstone Lighthouse on the Farne Islands has been Grace Darling's home for all of her 22 years. When she and her father rescue shipwreck survivors in a furious storm, Grace becomes celebrated throughout England, the subject of poems, ballads, and plays. But far more precious than her unsought fame is the friendship that develops between Grace and a visiting artist. Just as George Emmerson captures Grace with his brushes, she in turn captures his heart.

1938: Newport, Rhode Island. Nineteen years old and pregnant, Matilda Emmerson has been sent away from Ireland in disgrace. She is to stay with Harriet, a reclusive relative and assistant lighthouse keeper, until her baby is born. A discarded, half-finished portrait opens a window into Matilda's family history. As a deadly hurricane approaches, two women, living a century apart, will be linked forever by their instinctive acts of courage and love.

There are several books with the title *The Light Keeper's Daughter*. Please make sure you get the one by Hazel Gaynor.

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## ***News from the Pews***

*Do you have a special event you would like to share with your Church family – a birth, a graduation, a new job, an engagement, a wedding, a special honor, etc., etc.? Drop a note off in the secretary's office or e-mail Heidi at [churchoffice@eastwoodstockchurch.org](mailto:churchoffice@eastwoodstockchurch.org).*

## ***In Memory***

We give thanks for the completed life of Steve Lincoln and the blessing that he was to so many people; we ask for God's strength and comfort to be with his family and friends.

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## **Star Gifts**



*Several years ago, we began celebrating Epiphany with a new tradition of receiving "Star Gifts". About 400 different words are printed on colorful star-shaped paper. During the service, baskets of the stars are passed around and each of us takes one – without looking! When we receive our Star Gift, no matter what it is, we are asked to contemplate the meaning of the word in our lives over the course of the year. Sometimes the word will speak to you immediately; sometimes it is not so easy to see the relevance, but it is thought-provoking and often some meaning can be found even when you want to throw it back and take another! Please join us on January 7<sup>th</sup> when we will be receiving Star Gifts.*

 **Public Notices****A CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING**

A call for the annual meeting of the East Woodstock Congregational Church which will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2024, immediately following worship to:

1. Hear and act on officer and committee reports.
2. Hear and act on the report of the Society Committee regarding the 2024 budget.
3. Hear and act on the report of the Nominating Committee
4. Hear and act on any other business to come before the meeting.

Called by the Church Council

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**\*\*Attention all Committee Chairs! \*\***

The deadline for all annual reports is **January 8, 2024**. A complete copy of the Annual Report needs to be available to the Congregation by Sunday, January 22. Please do your best to get your reports to Heidi on time. Word documents are preferred. Thank you!

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**“Breakfast Church”**

We will once again enjoy Breakfast Church prior to our Annual Meeting! Join us on Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. We will meet in Fellowship Hall for a delicious meal and join together in worship as we are seated around the tables. Our choir and bell choir will share special music. We will give thanks for the gift of our congregation as we prepare for our annual meeting. The meeting will take place immediately following breakfast and worship.

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(See Luke 2:1-16)

12-19-2014

IT HAD A STAR ON TOP SO I FIGURED IT  
SHOULD HAVE A MANGER AT THE BOTTOM

# New Christmas Tradition

Beginning December 1st read one chapter  
of the book of Luke in the Bible each  
evening.

There are 24 chapters.

On Christmas Eve you will have read an  
entire account of Jesus's Life and wake up  
Christmas morning knowing WHO and  
WHY we celebrate!!



# SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

## Children's Corner

Hello EWCC Family!

It is Advent Season!

The young people are excited for everything Christmas! In the classroom we are focusing on the pageant – which features stars this year.

In the safety of the classroom the students all have lots to share. They take turns reading, making suggestions, and taking on different tasks of all kinds.

November was a special month of considering all that we are grateful for. We built on our lessons from October about prayer and demonstrated our appreciation by cleaning out and reorganizing the Sunday School closets on Jean Sunday, and by learning about how our friend Alioune is doing half way across the world.

Remember, we are offering a nursery this year, which is really appreciated by both the parents and the pre-school kiddos themselves! Please invite young families to come to church and take advantage of this offering for them to worship while their children are being cared for by our vetted volunteers.

Please mark your calendars -

The Christmas pageant will take place on December 17th this year. It should be especially lovely because it will feature our bell choir as well as our children.

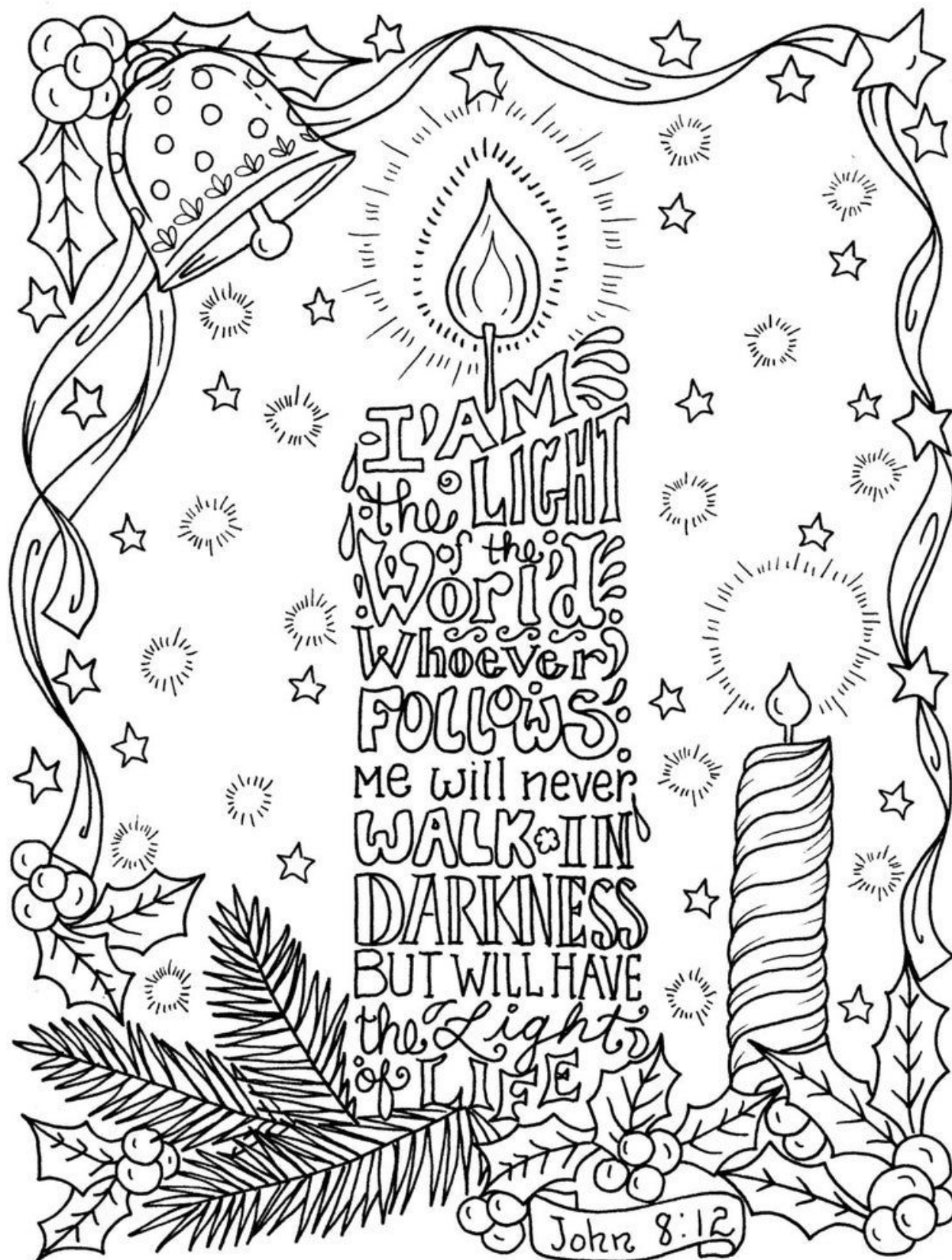
Looking far ahead, there will be a clothing drive in January. Men's winter clothes will be our primary focus. There will be reminders as we get closer to the date.

Count your blessings, out loud, with the children in your life.

Peace,  
Jessica Weaver Boose



## A Picture to Color



December 2023						
Pantry Donations for this month: Holiday Meal Items						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> 9:00 am – 10 am First Friday Food Fair	<b>2</b> <b>10 am – 2 pm</b> <b>Art/Craft Show</b>
<b>3</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>4</b> 9 am Community Kitchen 6:30 pm Deacons	<b>5</b> 7:00 pm Council (Sue's) 7:00 pm Choir	<b>6</b> 10 am Study Group 7:30 pm Al-anon	<b>7</b> 12:00 pm L'apres-midi group 7:00 pm Bells	<b>8</b> 9:30 am MOMs	<b>9</b> 5 pm Flying Free Potluck Fundraiser
<b>10</b> <b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>11</b> 6:00 pm Outreach	<b>12</b> 7:00 pm Choir	<b>13</b> 10 am Study Group <b>1:30 pm LBS Christmas party</b> 7:30 pm Al-anon	<b>14</b> 7:00 pm Bells	<b>15</b> <b>TRUMPET DEADLINE!!</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Christmas Pageant</b> <b>Gift Tags Due</b> 8:00 am Men's Breakfast	<b>18</b> 7:00 pm Dartball	<b>19</b> 7:00 pm Choir	<b>20</b> 10 am Study Group 7:00 pm Bells 7:30 pm Al-anon	<b>21</b> 7:00 pm "A Quiet Christmas" Service	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Christmas Eve Services:</b> 5 pm & 11 pm	<b>25</b> <i>Merry Christmas!</i>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 7:30 pm Al-anon	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> <b>New Year's Eve</b> 10 am Worship	<i>Happy New Year!</i>					

Looking Ahead:

January 7 – Star Gift Sunday

January 28 – Annual Meeting

Merry  
Christmas

December Birthdays:

Rylan Shemansky	Dec 1
Victoria Tolentino	Dec 2
Alexander Hermonot	Dec 17
Charles Manhanga	Dec 23
Karoline Noë	Dec 23

# PRAYER PAGE

*When we are apart from one another, we can be united in prayer...*

## ***I No Longer Pray for Peace***

On the edge of war, one foot already in,  
I no longer pray for peace:  
I pray for miracles.

I pray that stone hearts will turn to tenderheartedness,  
And evil intentions will turn to mercifulness,  
And all the soldiers already deployed will be snatched  
Out of harm's way,  
And the whole world will be astounded onto its knees.

I pray that all the "God talk" will take bones,  
And stand up and shed its cloak of faithlessness,  
And walk again in its powerful truth.  
I pray that the whole world might sit down together  
And share its bread and wine.

Some say there is no hope,  
But then I've always applauded the holy fools who never  
Seem to give up the scandalousness of our faith:  
That we are loved by God...  
That we can truly love one another.

I no longer pray for peace:  
I pray for miracles.

- By Ann Weems



Lord Jesus,  
Please forgive me for being so grumpy as I trudge through the never-ending tasks set before me  
this holiday season...  
My to-do list seems to keep growing with shopping, church services, and family gatherings---  
and I'm running short of time!  
Restore the joy of Christmas to my heart . . .  
and help me to relax each day and make time for  
YOU--  
my one true Source of Joy.