



# BAPTIST BULLETIN

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
WEST ACTON BAPTIST CHURCH  
DECEMBER 2020

## Pastor's Word

*Behold, I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:19)*

In a recent *New York Times* piece (11-22-2020), Priya Parker suggests that we take this year's COVID-imposed travel and gathering restrictions as an opportunity to try some new holiday traditions on for size. "This," she writes, "is the year for an improv" holiday.

"Holidays," she points out, "are hand-me-down tools that we mistakenly think of as precious art, created by our ancestors to *do* something — to plant seeds, to settle debts, to resolve conflicts and to heal grievances." Once these pop-up problem-solving rituals have served their purpose, they often disappear culturally. But some remain. Some, like our holy seasons of Advent and Christmastide, remain for a long time, because they have, we believe, existed for a purpose larger and higher than that of a single moment in human history. But all human expression of what we find crucial to us is, ultimately, bound by time and circumstance, and time and circumstance this year are not making things easy.

Faced with the disappointment, isolation, anxiety, and grief of this past year that are now overtaking our holiday season, we could respond by refusing to celebrate entirely, or by refusing to change how we celebrate and forging ahead as usual despite the danger. But Parker suggests a third, and I suggest holier, way: what she and Keith Johnstone call "the imaginative response." What that means is that, when the holiday script is thrown out the window, we respond to the need in front of us, just as improv actors do. Improv actors "intentionally accept everything as an offer, even curveballs" in order to create a new piece of performance art on the spot. This is basically what God asks us to do daily, gives us the strength and grace to do, and came to us in Christ to demonstrate how to do. This is also exactly how grace operates, since it is in the new and the unexpected, even when embedded in the daily round, that rivers of grace spring forth in the wilderness.

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# Preaching Schedule

## December 6<sup>th</sup>

Communion Sunday & Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8

Sermon: "The Beginning of the Good News"

## December 13<sup>th</sup>

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Luke 1:39-56

Sermon: "When Grace Comes In"

## December 20<sup>th</sup>

Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:26-38

Sermon: "Brave"

## December 24<sup>th</sup>

Christmas Eve Service

On Zoom ONLY at 6:00pm

## December 27<sup>th</sup>

Joint worship with FBC Littleton, they are the host

Link will be emailed that week

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Sometimes, our best spiritual progress occurs during our hardest struggles. (Not, note, that I mean to romanticize pain or struggle.) As a confirmed willy-nillyer myself, I find that I frequently do best with fewer options, weird options, or lousy options. You may, on reflection, find this to be true of yourself, too, which would not be surprising, since it is a delightfully ordained survival trait that our resourcefulness kicks into gear when our choices are limited. Small children often instinctively limit their choices in the face of sensory overload. Ask any parent: On Christmas morning, when all of the toys and other bits and bobs are unwrapped, what is the toddler playing with? Answer: The boxes.

If we can, even momentarily, even grumblingly, shift our perspective from fighting our constraints to taking inspiration from them, we may find this Advent and Christmas season more deeply joyous, more complex and nuanced, than others before it. Certainly, this holiday season is a new thing springing forth among us; it remains to us to really see it for the divine opportunity, the great gift, that it is.

The Lord bless and keep you and yours, now and always.

~ Pastor Leah

## Guidelines

If you attend worship in person, You must **follow the guidelines** if you do:

- You **MUST** wear a mask at all times
- If you are sick or think you are coming down with something, **STAY HOME**
- If you have a temperature, **STAY HOME**
- Please sanitize your hands once you enter the church, sanitizer is in the coatroom
- Please sign the sheet in the coatroom that states you were in the church
- You may only use the handicapped bathroom
- Do not enter fellowship hall or the kitchen
- No food or drink
- No hugging
- No singing
- Keep 6 Ft. apart
- Only sit in pews that are not taped off
- Any socialization should be done outside
- Do not touch any of the bible or hymnals
- If you test positive for Covid-19, notify the church ASAP
- **NO** Playground use

# Discipleship Team

**Child Care** Due to the State of MA Guidelines, we will be unable to offer childcare during worship until further notice.

**Sunday School** is on hold at the moment, but we may launch an online Zoom class. Please download & print the children's bulletins that are included each week with the Sunday worship information.

# WABC Women

- All in person activities have been suspended until we feel it is safe to meet.
- We will meet on Zoom for our Christmas Party this year. Here is the info:  
Topic: Women's Christmas Gathering  
Time: Dec 12, 2020 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
- We encourage all to donate a \$10 gift card to the Acton Food Pantry or to a needy Acton family since we are unable to have our Yankee Swap at our Christmas Party.
- There are ongoing webinars through AB Women's Ministries, information on their website: <https://abwomensministries.org/>.

# Finance Team

We encourage you to use our **Online Giving** link on our website. There are directions on that page of our website during this time of social distancing. You may also mail your pledges to the church. It is very important to keep up with your pledge, especially since we are only receiving limited Building Use fees.

Thank you to all who turned in their **2021 Commitment Card**.

# Celebrations

## December Birthdays

|              |             |                    |             |           |             |
|--------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Lorna Harris | December 2  | Mary-Lou Chapski   | December 3  | Ira Smith | December 8  |
| Doug Taylor  | December 9  | Mary Beth Williams | December 11 | Tom Howes | December 16 |
| Lucy Howes   | December 22 | Tori Taylor        | December 28 |           |             |

## December Anniversaries

|                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Ty and Genetriz Lamb | December 22 |
|----------------------|-------------|

# FBC Littleton

## Common Thursdays

**Dec. 3, 5:45 p.m. Asking the Hard Questions: How are we handling addictions during the Pandemic?**

What spiritual support do we/can we offer people struggling with addictions in these days? Rev. Leah Goodwin will be facilitating this session.

**Dec. 17, 5:45 p.m. Blue Christmas**

A time of prayer, music, and remembrance during the holiday season for those who have had losses or who need a quiet time of worship

## Ham & Bean Supper

**Dec. 5**

A Curbside Pick-up Event

Pick Up Meals 4:30-5:30 p.m.

First Baptist Church Littleton Common

461 King Street, Littleton

**Meal must be ordered by December 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Call the Church: 978-486-4660 or Email the Church: [office@fbclittleton.org](mailto:office@fbclittleton.org) & Leave your name and the number of meals desired.

All meals will include: Ham, Beans, Mac & Cheese, Squash, Brown Bread, Salad and Cookies & Bars

**Cost: Adults \$7, Seniors \$6, Families \$25 - Cash only**

# Poinsettia Donations

## Linda & Richard O'Neil

In memory of Ethel & Warren Davis  
In memory of Richard & Gertrude O'Neil  
In honor of Carol Peabody

## Bev Thatcher

**Ruth Thatcher**  
In honor of Zach & Abby

## Jim & Joan Richards

In memory of our parents

## Vanessa Buehner

In memory of Linda Hansen Buehner

## Kathi Gellar

## Scott & Lori Bruneau

In memory of Lawrence Bruneau  
In honor of Nancy Dodge & Ruth Thatcher



# Mission Team

Team Members: Val Nolen, Linda O'Neil, Joan Richards and Ruth Thatcher

We met with Pastor Leah on Tuesday, November 17 and discussed our ministry to missions for local and special offerings. We call and keep in prayers those in our congregation during this Pandemic.

- **Christmas Gift Opportunities:** Gift Cards for local stores Donelan's and Roche Brothers, Trader Joe's and Market Basket are need for the Acton Food Pantry. Send a check to WABC with the notation Food Pantry in the memo section if you can help with this outreach. Also, gift cards for Walmart are needed for the Multicultural Baptist Ministries Mission with Rev. Mar Imsong for people to buy Christmas gifts for their families this year during the pandemic. They are not able to have collections of toys and items for the Christmas party, so any help you can provide will be greatly appreciated. Cards can be mailed to the church office, or a check made payable to WABC in the memo section gift card for MBMM for Xmas.
- Joan Richards, Rev. Leah Goodwin, Michael and Nancy Henry were able to participate in TABCOM's Mission Matters monthly ZOOM meeting held the second Thursday of every month! NOVEMBER 12TH at 6:30 Eastern Time with guest speaker Rev. Kit Ripley who shared about her ministry to girls and women overcoming violence and abuse in Thailand. Check out this video link for an inspiration message from Rev. Kit. Please continue to pray for her as she completes her certification for Art Therapy and plans to Return to Thailand when regulations allow. This link will take you to the IM website to learn more about Kit: <https://www.internationalministries.org/author/k-ripley/>
- **World Mission Offering:** Thank you to all who participated in this special offering. Please continue to pray for those ABC-I-M (International Ministries) staff and missionaries through the world.
- **COMMUNITY SUPPER – ACTON:** On December 2, 2020, we are hosting the supper at Mt. Calvary Community Supper. If you are able to spend some time helping serve and/or distribute the meal to those seeking community warmth in a challenging time, please speak to Ruth Thatcher (978-263-5374 or email her at wabcrueth@live.com). Sympathy to the family of Michael Tobia, Coordinator at the Community Supper who died recently. He had been or contact for a number of years with this outreach.
- **Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering:** The month of December we are highlighting the special offering for praising the Lord by sharing gifts through a special offering for those servants who responded to the call of Jesus serving in the Ministry and in the Mission field during their active employment years. This gift is a tangible thank you and means of appreciation for individuals who have served 15 years or more in the American Baptist outreach in the name of Jesus Christ. Please keep those in prayer who have made a difference in your life and lead your to a path of stronger faith in God. Please take time and go to the abc-usa.org website and click on the link to this offering. Scripture reading for this outreach: Jeremiah 29- 11-13. Please pray for all who serve the Lord through Jesus Christ. Help them find a pathway to salvation and strength in their soul's journey.
- **School of Ministry:** Congratulations to Val Nolen as she graduated from the School of Ministry program, TABCOM, on November 21, 2020. She started this process when Rev. Tony Pappas was Executive Minister and we are thankful for all she has accomplished. Pastor Leah was able to attend the Zoom graduation as the WABC representative. We thank God for all his blessings that have come from this outreach.
- **Keep in prayer:** MIRA (Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition) works with refugees continues to be a challenge for many trying to flee dangerous conditions and arrive here in the U.S. to find difficult rules in place to qualify for aid with high legal fees and application forms with costs attached. Please continue to pray for all as we work toward understanding where we can help in this process. MIRA is proud to be part of the Driving Families Forward Coalition, which is advocating for the Work and Family Mobility Act (H.3012, co-sponsored by Reps. Tricia Farley-Bouvier and Christine Barber) and S.2061 (Sen. Brendan Crighton).
- **Loving Hearts:** Remember to honor someone with a gift for Loving Hearts and our report in the Finance Annual Meeting document will give a final total that we have been able to assist those seeking help in our midst.

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- **HOPE MOUNTAIN, HOPE UNLIMITED, BRAZIL OUTREACH:** Rev. Corenne Smith: (Remember Jannell Davis went on a Mission Volunteer Trip from WABC at the time). Please keep them in prayer as they do the Lord's work on Hope Mountain. The Mission Team plus two have committed to a 30 days prayer day one day at a time for young people who have been brought from the pit of despair and hope to the loving outreach community of Hope Mountain, Brazil. As of this Council Meeting we will have prayers more than half way through this outreach. The stories of the people highlighted are heart wrenching and powerful testimonies to the love of Jesus through their faith journey and with the dedicated mission work of Hope Unlimited. Here is the message we got and I share this as part of our Team Report:

*"Starting today, and during each of the next 30 days, you will receive a heartfelt request for prayer from the mission field in Brazil. Each post includes details of a special boy, girl, or situation we need prayer for. God dearly loves each child—more deeply than humanly possible. And he calls us to pray. Over and over, scripture encourages us to ask, petition, converse, and worship through prayer. Hearts hardened beyond belief have changed; children's lives have been transformed, and doors that would have remained closed have opened. You are our supporters, and the people who care most about this ministry. If you don't pray, who will? Together, let us raise our voices on behalf of each request!*

*Corenne & Philip Smith Serving with Hope Unlimited in Brazil"*

Please continue to pray for all who seek salvation in the name of Jesus and for those serving in the mission field wherever they are called and are moved to action.

## Fundraising

**This is the time of year we all begin to think about gifts we would like to give others. Here are some excellent opportunities to check off gifts for people on your list while helping your church with fundraising.**

**Coffee** – Coffee makes a great gift!! We place an order for coffee every month. Go to our fundraising page on our [website](#) & fill out the form. The cost is \$11/lb for Regular – Whole/Ground/Medium/Dark and \$12/lb for Decaf Whole/Ground/Medium/Dark. The coffee is Fair Trade & Organic and is roasted & shipped within 24 hours. Our church gets \$3/lb for every pound we sell. Once you taste this coffee, you'll never want anything else. NEXT orders are going in at 9am on **Monday, December 28<sup>th</sup>**.



**RADA Cutlery** - We have a continuous internet Fundraiser through RADA Cutlery. Please use this link to purchase items directly from RADA. Share the link with your friends, family & Facebook!! Rada Cutlery is 100% American Made – raw materials and construction and has made & sold over 150,000,000 knives since 1948, earning the reputation for remarkable cutlery, service, and value.

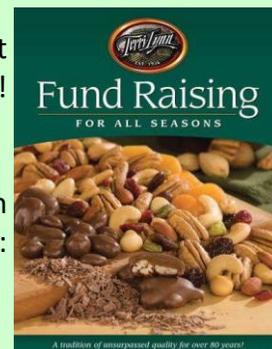
[https://radafundraising.com?rfsn=837262.422f8&utm\\_source=refersion&utm\\_medium=influencers&utm\\_campaign=837262.422f8](https://radafundraising.com?rfsn=837262.422f8&utm_source=refersion&utm_medium=influencers&utm_campaign=837262.422f8)

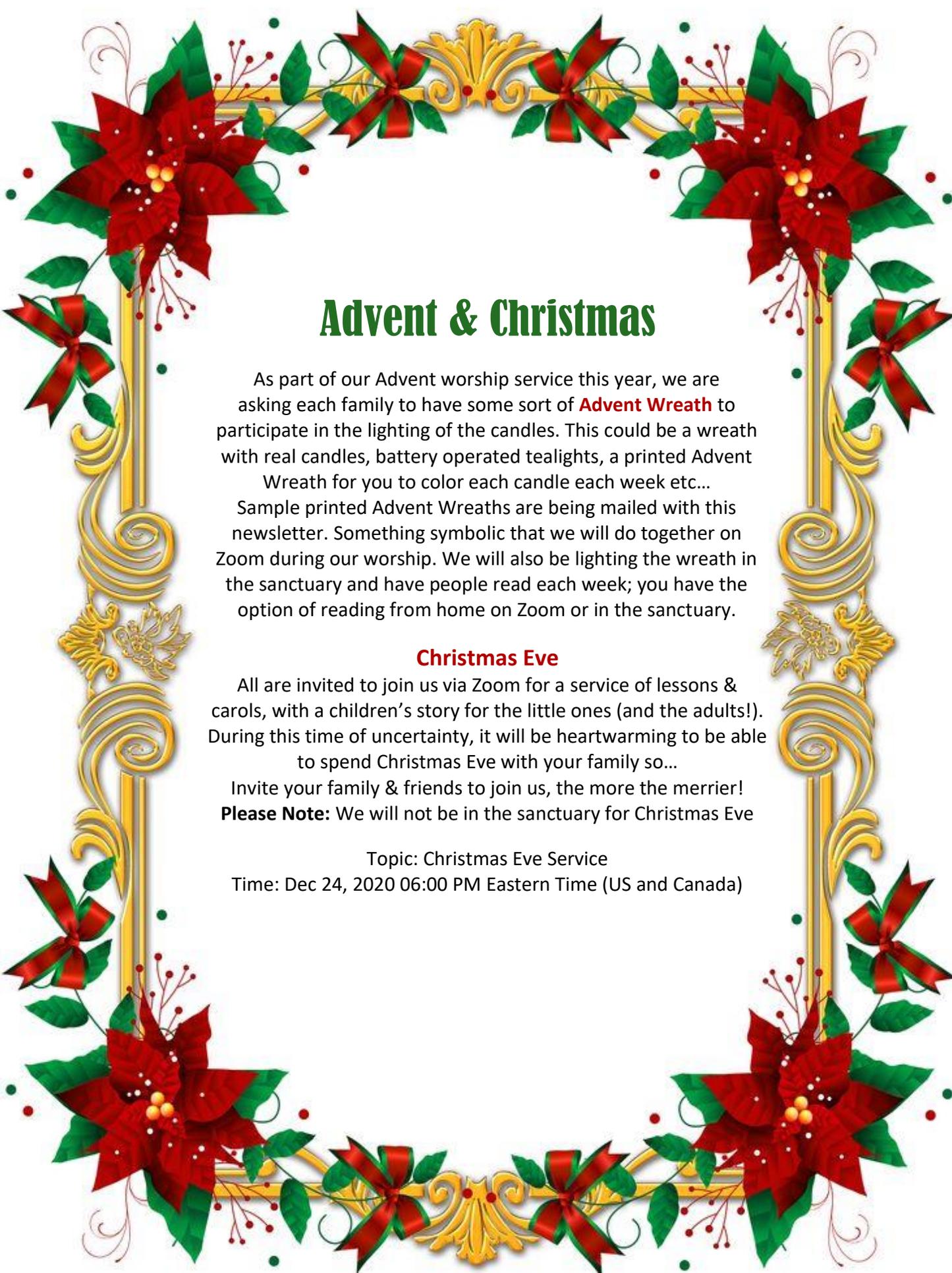
**Terri Lynn Fundraising** This company ships directly to you so there is no middleman at WABC. We earn 30% of your order. They offer a variety of Nuts, Dried Fruit & Chocolate! The link to begin your shopping is: <https://wabaptistchurch.terrilynn.com/>



**Amazon** - Please link your purchases with AmazonSmile for us to earn a %. Here is the link:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/04-6067819>





## Advent & Christmas

As part of our Advent worship service this year, we are asking each family to have some sort of **Advent Wreath** to participate in the lighting of the candles. This could be a wreath with real candles, battery operated tealights, a printed Advent Wreath for you to color each candle each week etc...

Sample printed Advent Wreaths are being mailed with this newsletter. Something symbolic that we will do together on Zoom during our worship. We will also be lighting the wreath in the sanctuary and have people read each week; you have the option of reading from home on Zoom or in the sanctuary.

### Christmas Eve

All are invited to join us via Zoom for a service of lessons & carols, with a children's story for the little ones (and the adults!). During this time of uncertainty, it will be heartwarming to be able to spend Christmas Eve with your family so...

Invite your family & friends to join us, the more the merrier!

**Please Note:** We will not be in the sanctuary for Christmas Eve

Topic: Christmas Eve Service

Time: Dec 24, 2020 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)