



Christ United Methodist Church - Amherst, NY  
"Making Connections & Offering Opportunities  
for Faith, Love & Service"

## Weekly Update – December 2

### *The Perfect Tree*

Picking out a Christmas Tree can be challenging. Trying to find one that is big enough (but not too big), full enough (but not too full), strong enough (but not too strong) ... well, you get the idea. I think the inclination to pre-lit synthetic trees is that they take these challenges away. The shape is perfect, height is ideal, and lights spaced right. We want and long for perfection, particularly at the holidays.

When we brought our tree home there was a lot of pruning to get it to fit. Then had to be decided which side to face out, how to fill or hide that place in the middle where there is a big hole, and a host of other imperfections we hadn't noticed before. When we finally took a step back, we could see the possibility of perfection with lights and decorations.



This is a season when God first steps back to see that peace, hope, joy and love are possible before stepping into creation and in grace beginning the pruning, turning, lighting and decorating of our lives. What God sees is possibility. Each of us is chosen through Christ. That is the Christmas story. Into the imperfection and messiness of our lives God came in Christ. And the gift of Christ is that gift of grace to help us see and know it, too.

-Pastor Daven

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### *Stewardship Update*

This week the leadership of Christ Church adopted our financial plan for next year. This represents the hope for living our vision in 2021 of 'Making Connections and Offering Opportunities for Faith, Love, and Service.' We remain 6 pledges short of our goal in responses of those committed to this vision. While that does represent ~\$10,000, our goal is less about the ministry dollars and more about the personal connection to and investment in this vision that God

has laid upon Christ Church. If you have not yet returned a pledge, please do so either in the offering plate, by mail, or by submitting the Google form that can be found under the 'Give' heading on our website ([christchurchamherst.org](http://christchurchamherst.org)). If a pledge card is needed, call (839-2460) or email the church ([cumc350@gmail.com](mailto:cumc350@gmail.com)) and one will be sent.

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NYS has created a color-coded system to indicate levels of COVID-19, with limitations imposed based upon color. Currently our region is in an 'orange zone', which limits our in-person gatherings for worship beyond those directly involved to 20 people.

**We are inviting those interested in attending worship *in-person* to call or email the church office (839-2460) between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. each Friday prior to the weekend's service, with those 20 spots being reserved on a first-come-first-served basis.**

If our region moves into a 'red zone', all in-person worship will be suspended.

We continue to offer online worship opportunities via Live-Stream on [our YouTube channel](#), which is archived following its conclusion. While our hope remains to have in-person opportunities for Sunday worship, Music & Meditation on Friday evenings, and on Christmas Eve, we are committed to the health and safety of all people. We will follow all guidelines provided and strongly advise any who are nervous or feeling even slightly unwell to please stay home and worship virtually through this time.

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Christmas Eve worship this year will be a Livestream / online only experience. This is based on the priority of people's health and safety in addition to our objective of offering a more complete experience than would be possible in-person.

**The Christmas Eve service will Livestream on our YouTube channel first at 5 PM on December 24th. Following the conclusion of the Livestream, it will be available on our channel at any time.**

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### ***Music & Meditation***

***Fridays, December 4, 11, & 18  
5:30 - 6 p.m.***

Join us during the Advent season for 30 minutes of meditative songs, Scripture reading, and prayer in a quiet, candlelit setting.

This opportunity will also be available via live-stream ([www.YouTube.com/CUMCAmherst/live](http://www.YouTube.com/CUMCAmherst/live)), and then archived on [our YouTube channel](#).



*Worship is now available on Sunday mornings at 10am, both in person and online!*

***Live-streamed worship will be available beginning at 10am each Sunday, with a direct link posted on our website and Facebook page to our livestream: [www.youtube.com/CUMCAmherst/live](http://www.youtube.com/CUMCAmherst/live)***

***Recordings of each service will also be available on our YouTube channel for viewing once the service has ended.***

Please be advised of new guidelines for those wishing to worship together in person at Christ Church:

- All will be required to wear a mask.** We will have a limited supply of masks on hand for those who come without one.
- Enter through one door at the main entrance.**
- Use hand sanitizer** at the provided station before entering the Sanctuary.
- Maintain social distancing** (6 feet apart) from those not within your immediate family.
- Please do not enter the building if you are experiencing any symptoms** (fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, chills, diarrhea).

*We will continue to provide online opportunities for worship and connection.* Our [YouTube channel](#) is the best way to find new content and worship services. We encourage you to 'Subscribe' to our channel! You'll be notified each time new content is uploaded, and the more subscribers we have, the less ads will appear!

[Click here to check out our YouTube channel](#)

[Click here to be connected to our website](#)

[Click here to be directed to our Facebook page](#)

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## ***This Week at Christ Church***

### **Fall Office Hours:**

***Monday/ Wednesday/ Friday***

***9a.m. - 2p.m.***

***At all times, even during office hours, the building will remain locked. Please call for admittance.***

**Thursday, December 3**

**1 p.m. - Thirstaid Thursday Study**

**Friday, December 4**

5:30 p.m. - Music & Meditation

**Saturday, December 5**

10 a.m. - UMW Virtual Christmas Coffee Gathering

**Sunday, December 6**

10 a.m. - Worship In-Person and Live-Stream

**Monday, December 7**

7 p.m. - Advent Zoom Study

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*Daily Bible Reading – 2020 Shaping Our Life Experience*

Excerpts from both the Old and New Testament are included each day. This is a great way to support your ongoing growth in faith and the Christ Church community as well.

December 2: Ezekiel 47-48; 1 John 1

December 3: Daniel 1-2; 1 John 2

December 4: Daniel 3-4; 1 John 3

December 5: Daniel 5-6; 1 John 4

December 6: Daniel 7-8; 1 John 5

December 7: Daniel 9-10; 2 John 1

December 8: Daniel 11-12; 3 John 1

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***In Our Healing Prayers***

-**Geoff Hill** - recovering from back surgery

-**Lynda Painton** - knee surgery

**Amy Thormahlen, Jim Pollard, Scott Smith, Sue Estee, Ruth Munson, Parents of Brad Bermudez, Mother of Lisa Lawson, Dave Mitchell, Paul Staley, Dave Wolf, Valari Zanghi, Sandy Cumming, Bill Swenson, Debbie Laberta & Chrissy Merrill, Kevin Cetola, Nancy & Frank Annunziata, Helen Peacock, Joe & Carolyn Day, Dick Ball, Barbara Weaver, Inez Beachley, Bob Varian, John Ladowski, Janet Hill, Mary Jane Shanley, Jean Ericson**

\*All educators and students dealing with new school realities

\*Those affected with COVID-19, those working on the front lines, and all impacted by the suspension of work and activities.

\*Those who are **care partners** with others

\*Pray for Chris Maliken, Lindsey Darling & Ian Johnson, serving in the US Navy



It's that time of the year again for **the Giving Tree!** Each Christmas we collect gifts that various charities would like to receive to support their missions. This year's recipients include: **Gateway-Longview** and **The Family Justice Center.**

Given the unique challenges that this year brings, we will only be collecting gift cards at this time. Suggested retailers include: Walmart, Target, Amazon, Tops, and Wegmans. All gift card amounts will be accepted and are appreciated!

If you wish to participate, please purchase a gift card and submit it to the church office or Diane Klenk by the given deadline (deadlines vary by charity, with Gateway-Longview's gifts needed first *by December 6*). Please contact Diane (651-0236) with any questions. Arrangements can also be made for pickup of gift cards if you are unable to bring them to the church.

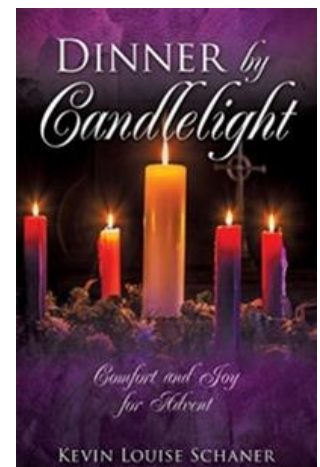
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## **Monday Night Zoom Study** **Dec. 7, 14, 21 @ 7 pm**

Dinner by Candlelight: Comfort and Joy for Advent  
by Kevin Louise Schaner

Christmas Is Coming! Feeling Anxious? Expect Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace this Advent. Rekindle your anticipation of Christ's birth with comforting conversation. This daily devotional is a collection of deeply engaging essays that provide not only food for thought during the pre-Christmas season, but also inspiration and hope for the future.

Paperbacks are available through a variety of online vendors including Cokesbury, Barnes & Noble, and Amazon. A digital version is available from Nook and Kindle. Facilitator: Peggy Bermudez



Topic: Advent Study - Dinner by Candlelight  
Time: Every week on Monday, until December 21

**Dec 7, 2020 @ 7:00 PM**  
**Dec 14, 2020 @ 7:00 PM**  
**Dec 21, 2020 @ 7:00 PM**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

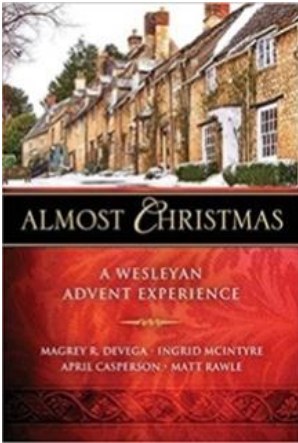
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83024787818>

**Meeting ID: 830 2478 7818**

One tap mobile  
+19292056099,,83024787818# US (New York)

Dial by your location  
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

**Thirstaid Thursdays**  
**December 3, 10, & 17 @ 1 pm**



We will be connecting the traditional Advent themes of Love, Hope, Joy, and Peace to our Wesleyan heritage. Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience explores John Wesley's encouragement to follow Christ wholeheartedly with the commitment we can make to Christ in Advent. In addition to this Thirstaid time, each week in Advent there will also be an opportunity to engage with Almost Christmas on our YouTube channel. The book is not required, but if you would like to purchase a copy, paperbacks are available through a variety of online vendors including Cokesbury, Barnes & Noble, and Amazon. A digital version is available from Cokesbury, Nook, and Kindle.  
Facilitator: Rev. Oskvig

Topic: Thirstaid - Almost Christmas

Every Week on Thursday until December 17

**Dec 3, 2020 @ 1:00 PM**  
**Dec 10, 2020 @ 1:00 PM**  
**Dec 17, 2020 @ 1:00 PM**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87676063612?pwd=eXIYSTJJSHpQclNiQmRqajJxc0Vjdz09>

**Meeting ID: 876 7606 3612**

**Passcode: 689315**

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,87676063612#,,,,,0#,,689315# US (New York)

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### ***Offering Envelopes***

Offering envelopes are available in the back of the worship space for those who have indicated an interest in receiving them. They can be picked up following Sunday worship, or during weekly office hours (Mon/Wed/Fri, 9am-2pm). If anyone is unable to pick them up from the church, please let the church office know and your box of offering envelopes can be mailed to you.