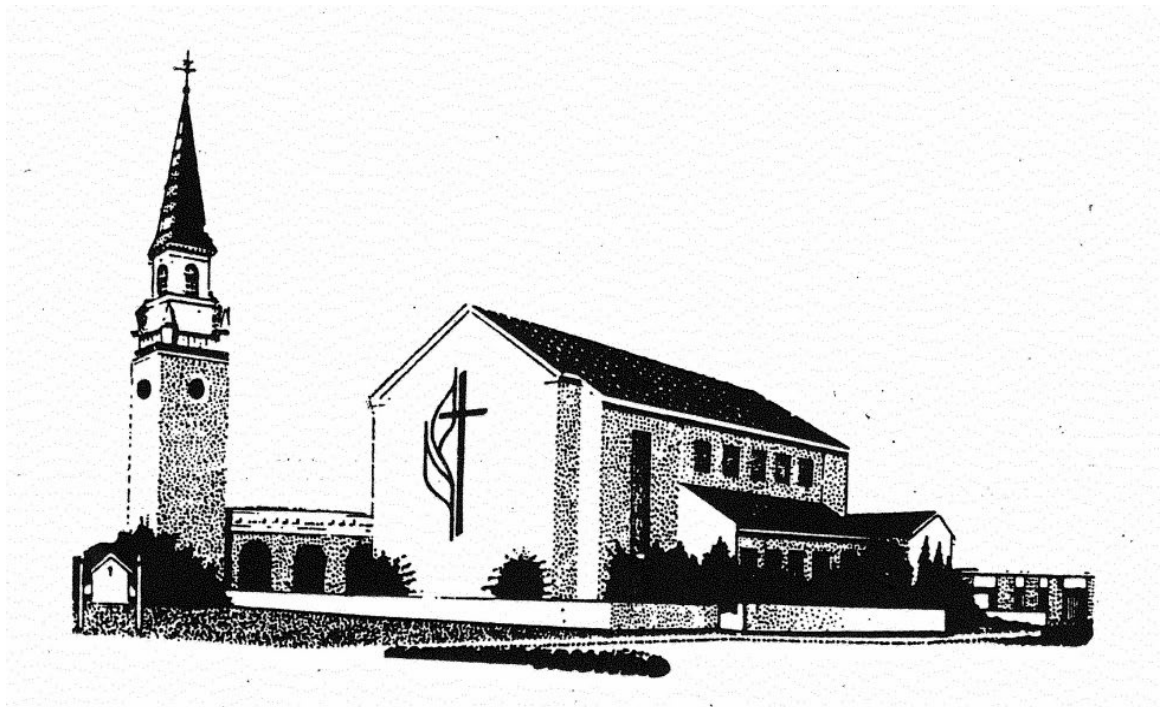


THE GOOD NEWS
From The
Stratford United Methodist Church

2600 MAIN STREET • STRATFORD, CT 06615-5893
SUMC phone: 203-375-5851 ~ fax: 203-375-6890

SUMC & Good News email: secretary@sumcct.org
SUMC website: www.sumcct.org

DECEMBER 2024



The Rev. Suhee Kim, Pastor
Affiliated Pastors: Rev. Carol Gibson,
Rev. George Hilton, Rev. James Stinson
Chris Muller, Director of Music
Beth Buckmir, Preschool Director
Church Office: Beth Sullivan, Secretary

DECEMBER SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE



December 1st - No Sunday School
December 8th - Sunday School
December 15th - Advent Celebration
December 21st - Cantata Rehearsal
December 22nd - Cantata
December 29th - No Sunday School

MUSIC PROGRAM NEWS FOR DECEMBER



Sunday, **December 1**, choir from First Baptist Church and SUMC will do a combined anthem during the 10:00 a.m. service. We will celebrate our many years of friendship and have a luncheon after service in the All-Purpose Room.

Sunday, **December 8**, following worship/coffee hour at 11:30 a.m. the choir & soloists will present "SONGS OF THE SEASON" a sing along program of popular Christmas music. This is open to the public. Everyone is invited to sing along and there will also be some solos and choir songs.

Sunday, **December 15**, Sunday afternoon at 4:00, the Choir and anyone else who would like to join will go Carol Singing to our shut-ins. Anyone who would like to sing is asked to meet us at the church at 3:45 to get their sheet music and organize a carpool. We will return to the church for hot chocolate and donuts afterwards.

Sunday, **December 22**, during 10:00 a.m. worship, The Choir, guest singers and Jerold Goldstein, pianist will present "THIS IS CHRISTMAS" a cantata by Mary McDonald along with the Sunday School Christmas Pageant.

Christmas Eve, **December 24**, at 8:00 p.m., the Choir, Grace Notes Handbells, soloists will join forces for our annual Lessons and Carols service.

SONGS OF THE SEASON

Sunday, December 8, 2024 - 11:30 a.m.

Christ is Born in Bethlehem by Everett Titcomb	Organ
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing - Hymn #240	Everyone +
Who Would Send a Baby? by Mary Kay Beall	Choir
<i>"Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"</i> by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane	Everyone +
<i>"Believe" from Polar Express</i> by John Ballard & Alan Silvestri	Christina Holms
Angels We Have Heard on High - Hymn #238	Everyone +
What Child is This? by Richard Warner	Choir
<i>"White Christmas"</i> by Irving Berlin	Everyone +
Pastorale on "Adeste <u>Fidelis</u> " by Pietro <u>Catani</u>	Organ
<i>"I'll Be Home for Christmas"</i> by Kim Gannon and Walter Kent	Everyone +
What Sweeter Music? by John Rutter	Choir
The First Noel - Hymn # 245	Everyone +

- Words to all the songs will be displayed on the screens in the front of the Sanctuary. The Carols can also be found in the Methodist Hymnal at the numbers indicated.



THIS IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - INVITE A FRIEND

OUT OF OUR PAST

O Holy Night

After the stained glass windows in the church in Roquemaure, France were renovated in 1843 the parish priest, Maurice Gilles, asked his friend, Placide Cappeau, a poet and wine commissioner, to write something for the rededication of the windows at the upcoming Christmas Midnight Mass. Cappeau wrote a poem which he called *Minuit, chretiens* during a stagecoach ride, basing it on the Gospel of Luke Chapter 2:4-12. He was friends with a singer, Emily Laurey, who in turn was friends with a famous opera composer, Adolphe Charles Adams, who wrote the music for the poem. It became known as "Cantique de Noel." Thus was born what we know as "O Holy Night."

The song was not without controversy as Cappeau did not have a good reputation and some early Catholic music critics noted that he was a socialist, a drunk, and a lapsed Christian. It was also suggested that it was not appropriate for Adams to have composed the music as he was Jewish.

But the song was a hit and as early as 1855 the "Cantique de Noel" was translated into English by John Sullivan Dwight who was an ordained Unitarian minister and an American music critic and teacher. Dwight took a few liberties with the translation as he was an abolitionist and wanted to promote his ideas of equality particularly in the third verse: "Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love, and His gospel is peace. Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother, and in His name all oppression shall cease!"

The song is not easy to sing. There are difficult high registers particularly in the chorus. But it's soaring music has captivated audiences everywhere in and out of church. It has been recorded by many pop artists including Mariah Carey, Celine Dion, Celtic Woman, Josh Groban though even they take liberties with the verse words. For example Josh Groban ends his rendition with "Noel, Noel," not "His power and glory evermore proclaim."

Lyrics of O Holy Night:

1. O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Til He appear'd and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;
O night divine, O night, O night Divine.

3. Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us praise His holy name.
Christ is the Lord! O praise His Name forever,
His power and glory evermore proclaim.
His power and glory evermore proclaim.



The Neighborhood Breakfast is every third Saturday at SUMC. Eat-in breakfast will be served from 8:30am to 10am. Guests will be greeted at the back parking lot entrance. We would greatly appreciate your help serving breakfast, donating items, or your time, if you can. If you are interested in helping, send a message to missions@sumcct.org.
Next month's breakfast will be Saturday, December 21st

Please donate breakfast items such as fruit, granola bars, muffins, yogurt, etc. Thank you for your donations!

Toiletry Items are Being Accepted!

Our team has been sharing donated toiletry items with guests who attend our monthly Neighborhood Breakfast. These items are greatly appreciated, and we could use more donations to offer at breakfasts in the months ahead.

There is a donation bin located in the narthex, and both men's and women's items are being accepted. We will gladly accept any size item (full size, samples, etc.). Donations suggestions include (but are not limited to): soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothpaste/toothbrush, deodorant, razors/shaving cream, lotion, tissues, and feminine products.

Thank You from Sterling House Community Center! The SUMC Mission fund donated the Food Drive donations and \$2,000 to Sterling House Community Center to help kids in our community!

Golden Hill UMC Community Supper - Volunteers Needed

The Golden Hill United Methodist Church in downtown Bridgeport is one of several Bridgeport churches that provide evening meals for those in need on different evenings of the week. Golden Hill hosts a meal every Wednesday. They provide the food, the location, and the planning. Others volunteer to provide the labor.

Our upcoming turn at Golden Hill UMC Community Supper is Wednesday, December 18th A cook and about 3 additional volunteers will be needed to start around 2:30 - 3:00 to prepare the meals. One to two volunteers will be needed to stay and help pack the meals from 5:30 on. Please contact Pat Knebel (pknebel@yahoo.com) if you are interested in volunteering.

The Lord's Kitchen

The next Lord's Kitchen will be on Monday, December 16th

December Good News

The Halloween decorations are gone, the stores are filled with Christmas items and the TV is telling me what I need to be “buying”!!! Wow – it must be time for me to write my Christmas “To Do List”.

1. Prepare my Christmas shopping list

Outreach: Donate to a charity providing gifts for needy FAMILIES.

Prayer: Prayers for help for families not able to buy gifts this year, especially families with children.

2. Pull out the Christmas decorations – “Deck the halls”!

Outreach: Help the church or other worthy organizations decorate – assist an elderly neighbor.

Prayer: Prayers that all may find meaning , hope and joy in the beautiful decorations of Christmas.

3. Send Christmas cards to friends and family

Outreach: Send cards to persons in Prison through a Prison Ministry Program. Send cards to shut-ins

Prayer: Prayers for all to receive words of good cheer and love this Season.

4. Begin the Christmas Baking

Outreach: Participate in a food ministry for the needy , bring cookies to someone unable to bake.

Prayer: Prayers that all may be fed and enjoy some special treats during the Holiday Season

5. Take time for the true meaning of the Season with Bible Reading, organ recitals, meditation.

Outreach: Offer a ride to someone to allow their attendance at special Holiday Events. Join the Christmas choir and share your talent.

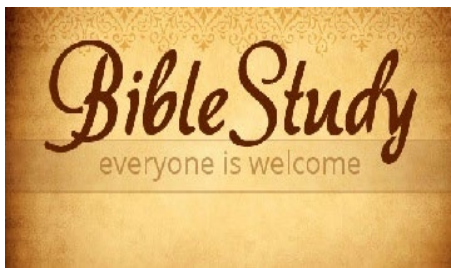
Prayer: Prayers that all may find time for the beautiful message of the season through music and worship. Special prayers for those with recent loss who will have difficulty finding the joy this year

December Good News (CONTINUED)

My "To Do" List is calling me. My Church calls me to Advent Preparation. The Lord calls me to Serve.

Take time for the Outreach? For the prayers?

Prayer: Father God, help us to find a balance between the parties and celebrations of this Christmas Season and the opportunities to reach out to help others. Fill my heart with the true meaning of Christmas and lead me to find Joy in Worship and Serving. Amen



Join Bible Study Tuesday, 2:00 p.m. on Zoom. Call church office to get link.

This is the book Bible class will be using for Advent An Unlikely Advent: Extraordinary People of the Christmas Story by Rachel Billups



Arts and Crafts will meet at 1:30 pm on Wednesday December 18. Note the time and date please. We will be filling the gift boxes for the Neighborhood Breakfast. And we will eat together so please bring a sandwich and a drink. Diane Troutman will bring the dessert. Please bring some canned goods for Sterling House Pantry. Hope to see you there!



Honoring Mike Kranyak

If you attend Sunday services here at SUMC you have met Mike. He has been Head Usher for years. He was always about in the morning, one of the first to arrive, unlocking doors, turning on lights, checking for his fellow ushers, organizing the bulletins for the day, checking candles and making sure the wicks are good, making sure the seating arrangements are correct and abundant. Did the sanctuary doors need to be open or closed? He did the same for our special services and for funeral services making sure all is ready, even the guest book. And did you know he has been counting you all these years—he pretty much knew whether you are at church or not! There is an official count of attendance taken every Sunday and at every service and he usually did that, filling out the paperwork after the service—yes there is an official form. And through it all Mike has been a friendly welcoming face to us and our visitors.

Mike has also been a member of the Historical Committee. He has a gift for filing! Every Sunday, special, and funeral service bulletin has been saved by Mike and filed for eternity. Council Meeting minutes, committee meeting minutes, gifts of old minutes have all been filed by Mike for us. He cut up his personal copy of the *Connecticut Post* to provide us with obituaries and other clippings about the church. All which got filed.

Mike has served our church in over ways over the years. Before COVID changed the way we distribute the Good News, Mike, and his wife Mary, joined the Susanna Wesley group each month to collate the pages of the Good News and prepare them for mailing. Mike was often seen in the kitchen operating the dishwasher for the Neighborhood Breakfast and other meals. In the early 2000s Mike participated in the Food Coop that we sponsored for a while.

Unfortunately Mike has had to relinquish all these tasks which he has done so well because of failing eyesight. But we are taking this an opportunity to honor his service and to show others some different ways to serve our church. It takes many hands to do our work.

A pen and ink drawing of the church was made available during coffee hour on Sundays in October for church members to sign and express their appreciation. This was framed and taken to Mike by Frank Damiano and Pastor Suhee to thank him for his service to our church. Thank you Mike for jobs well done!

NYACCT DISTRICT NEWS

JOIN US FOR
MARY TAYLOR MEMORIAL'S
SECOND ANNUAL

GINGERBREAD HOUSE CHALLENGE

Prizes will be awarded!

Snacks and Hot Chocolate Bar!

WHO: TEAMS OF 2-4 PEOPLE
TEAMS CAN BE FAMILIES OR FRIENDS!
WHAT: DECORATE YOUR HOUSE
WHEN: 12/8 2-4PM
WHERE: DODD HALL @ MTMUMC
RSVP REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE AS
SPACE IS LIMITED TO 12 TEAMS
EMAIL ADELINE AT ADELINE1019@YAHOO.COM

**A ready-made gingerbread house and decorations will be provided
Please bring a canned good from each team participant for our Purple Pantry**

**RSVP no later than Sunday, December 1st:
Church Office: 203-874-1982d: 203-736-4450
Adeline Hazzard: 203-736-4450**



Cranberry Orange Pancakes

15 minutes — Julie from Yuka

Ingredients^{4 servings}

• 4 navel oranges, peeled and segmented	• 4 large eggs
• 2 cups oat flour	• 2 cups cottage cheese
• 1 cup whole milk (or non-dairy milk)	• ½ cup dried cranberries
• 2 tbsp olive oil (divided)	• 1 tbsp fresh mint, chopped
• 1 tsp orange zest (from 1 orange)	• 2 tsp baking powder
• Garnish: maple syrup	

Directions

1- Using a blender, mix together the cottage cheese, oat flour, eggs, milk, and baking powder until smooth. Pour the batter into a bowl and mix in the orange zest, dried cranberries.

2 - Heat 1 tbsp of oil in a skillet over medium heat. Pour ¼ cup of the batter into the skillet and cook for 2-3 minutes on the first side until small bubbles form on the surface.

3 - Flip and cook on the other side for an additional minute, until golden brown. Repeat with the remaining batter, oiling the skillet as needed until finished.

4 - In a small bowl, combine the citrus segments and toss gently with chopped mint for the salad.

Serve warm pancakes with maple syrup and with the citrus salad on the side.

Notes:

- Use the small side of a box grater to zest the orange. Hold the orange firmly and gently scrape the outer orange-colored peel, avoiding the white pith underneath. Use the zest immediately for the best flavor. You can let the pancake batter rest for 5-10 minutes before cooking. This helps the oats absorb the liquid, for fluffier pancakes.

- **WEBSITE NEWS**
- As a part of my ongoing review and "enhancement" of our church website, I have added a new "scrolling marquee" to the homepage to bring attention to upcoming events, etc.
- It has text moving across the page that can be formatted in any shape, color, font, etc. we desire. It can have symbols embedded and links to other pages, documents, videos, etc.
- It can be hidden when not in use so it won't be there all the time, but if there is something special coming up in a few week's it will help bring attention to anyone seeing the website. Check it out.
-
- Click on this go to this site to see it in action: www.sumcct.org



Choir News

We always seeking new Choir members and Grace Notes Handbell Choir members for this season. If you know someone who loves to sing or reads music, or would like to try playing the handbells, please let them know!

If you play an instrument, we would love it if you shared your talents with us in worship.

If you're interested in joining or have questions, please speak to Chris after worship or send an email to music.director@sumcct.org. Required rehearsal times are flexible. There is also an option to sign up to participate in the seasonal Advent/Christmas and/or Palm Sunday/Easter choir.

Support our Music Program

If you would like to support the music program, donations can be made to the Church with a note/notation intending their direct support of this important ministry.

Your support allows us to hire extra musicians and singers for special events such as our seasonal Cantatas (Palm Sunday and Christmas) and Easter services.

Thank you!

Chris Muller, Director of Music

Staying In The Loop

The stove and ovens in the SUMC kitchen are currently not in use because the Stratford Fire Marshall has deemed the required fire suppression in the hood does not comply with town regulations. In addition, there may be a small gas leak associated with the stove so the gas has been turned off. The Trustees and Church Council are investigating options to repair/replace the fire suppression system and the stove with hopes of having this resolved quickly. If you have any questions, please speak to me, Steve James, or Pastor Suhee.

Peace,
Burdette James, Church Council Chair



Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. LUKE 2:4-5





Joy to the World

DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.



- | | | |
|--------------|---------|-------------|
| ADVENT | INFANT | MYRRH |
| ANGEL | JESUS | NATIVITY |
| BETHLEHEM | JOSEPH | REJOICE |
| BIRTH | MAGE | STABLE |
| BLESSINGS | MANGER | STAR |
| CAMELS | MARY | THREE KINGS |
| FRANKINCENSE | MIRACLE | WISE MEN |